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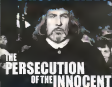
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ON THE COVER: Nightbreed demands its Blu-ray release!

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

It's time for the San Diego Comic-Con, and after visiting the event nine out of the last 10 years, I can easily say that there is no other show in the world that can compare. The seemingly unlimited number of vendors in attendance is highlighted by major studio presence... not just from the film industry, but studios representing the best in television, video games, toys and collectibles, art and, yes... even comic books.

Unlike last year's Con, which had only minor genre sites promoted, this year was packed to the brim with amazing horror events. From Zombieland's special zombie walk to panels and sneak peeks from such films and television programs as Jennifer's Body, Dexter, A Nightmare on Elm Street, New Moon, True Blood, Night of the Creeps, Fear Clinic (a new program starring Robert Englund on FearNet), Thirst and so on... there seems to be something for everyone who admires this dark art of cinema!

Unfortunately, however, the toy industry is starting to see the effects of the poor US (and world) economy, as the horror collectible seems to have suffered the most, with virtually no new major genre-related showings (outside of HZ), with both Cinema of Fear (Mezco) and Cult Classics (NECA) virtually non-existent on the showroom floor. For insight into the history of this 7" scale subgenre of toymaking, turn to page 36 as we take a look back at the origins and tribulations of the ultra detail horror action figure!

Ten years ago, I attended my first Comic-Con, in which The Blair Witch Project nearly took over the entire show floor. To celebrate its 10th anniversary, we have presented not only an amazing retrospective on the film (and its offspring), but a highly detailed account of the history of witchcraft (in and out of cinema), as well as accompanying articles via both Kitley's Krypt and GoreHound. We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we did making it!

Nathan Hanneman (Editor-in-Chief)

September/October 2009

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# LETTERS ♣ LETTERS ♣ LETTERS ♣ LETTERS ♣ LETTERS

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear HorrorHound

I thoroughly enjoyed Jimmy Dale Sizemore's "Remembering the Drive-In" article in the May/June '09 issue. I was amused by Mr. Sizemore's nostalgic expose, but was impressed by the list of current drive-ins throughout the US. I'm sure that book pulled a bit of research. Somewhere, some reader is going to appreciate that list more than he/she realizes.

I'm 42, and was enraptured with the newspaper ads of the '70s and '80s of drive-in double/quintuple-features throughout those years, especially horror films, which were prolific during this time. There is nothing worse for a kid than waiting for Christmas, but as I lived out in the boonies, VCRs had not come out yet, and we did not get cable (all the kids in school did though), hearing about the notorious Last House on the Left that was always playing as the "second big hit" or part of a three-bill tag-on with The House That Vanished and Don't Look in the Basement kept me waiting impatiently for when I could turn 17 to see these movies myself!

It was a wait that never ended! Video came out in 1983 and the drive-in business started to dry up, they started playing A-movies, not B-movies, to stay competitive, and they didn't last long. After I got my driver's license, I started going as often as I could, often with friends from college, but the thrill wasn't there. It was more of a social time - everyone was talking during the movie I'd paid to see - and I didn't understand the fans. There were no more triple or double-draw features that seemed so enticing, as they were all B-movies no one had ever heard of (Boys are Not for Children? New Year's Evil?). I've been in drive-in limbo since then, waiting for my "wait" to be satisfied. I don't think it ever will be!

I enjoyed the 1981 LA newspaper clippings showing the movie pairings at the city's drive-ins. Many movies were paired for drive-ins, whether they were similar or not. That was paired with Masoch, for instance. Others were similar (Scanners and The Visitor). I never did understand how the money for a multi-feature bill was split between theaters, distributors, and filmmakers, but it seemed like an interesting set-up.

In retrospect, the newspaper ads were probably more thrilling than the movies themselves. One weekend in 1982, a "Masoch-Dick-to-Damn" feature including The Day After Halloween, Shrek of the Mutated, The Rites are Coming, the Werewolves are Here (and two others I'll never remember), set high-school seniors' tongues wagging. I never met anyone who went, but can imagine the response. Day After Halloween was said to be a poor Australian drama having nothing to do with the hugely popular Halloween, and the others required patience to sit through and often did not have much shock payoff! Even for the triple-bill that always played on the dusk-to-dawn shows, only Last House on the Left and Don't Look in the Basement were worth watching. Whatever the movie goes the reception, "Last House"

alone played as a second feature for nearly 15 years after its initial release. Last House lasted until 1996, when the B-movies seemed to stop playing and the drive-ins switched to A-movies. Released in 1972, the film was said to have had a long track record, playing midnight movies in the winter, drive-ins in the summer, and reportedly grossing \$65 million for a movie that cost \$20,000 to make.

Mansion of the Doomed played as a second feature for 10 years. Who knows how much money it made, or what other titles played just as long? If anything, drive-ins seemed to be a cash cow and a sloping grounds for cinephile teenagers to chat with impunity throughout the movie, snuggling with friends until it was time to go home. No one, it seemed, was there to see the movie, except me! Oh well. Thanks again for the great article!

Glenn Allen, Randolph, NJ



I just gotta say the Phantasm cover issue of HorrorHound is just the coolest. Phantasm, drive-ins, old video labels, etc. It just sent me over the edge in a '70s retro flashback to better times and running around like a maniac trying to catch the newest drive-in movie or staying up to the wee hours to catch Wilford or The Creeping Terror on Fritz The Nite Owl's Double Chiller Theatre.

Phantasm and Kenny and Co. were the best times back in the late '70s catching them at the movies and seeing that TV spot about 30 times that Friday night it came out at the drive-in here in Ohio. I was staying over at pa's house that weekend and we couldn't decide which flick would be the best from the TV spots: Phantasm or Phantasy. Kenny and Co. brought back a true slice of '70s life at the time of dirt clods, "suicides," Halloween trick or treat, buffies, cute girls, etc. I want to go back so bad now!

The drive-ins coverage was amazing. We had two here in Marion, OH: The North and The South. The North truly showed the great stuff like House by the Cemetery, Peaches, The Hills Have Eyes, Guardians of Hell, Boarding House, etc. They had two screens and the back second one was for "any types" (horror and gore fans).

Luckily, I'm still within 20 minutes of the Sunset and Springhill up near Ottumwa/Mansfield, but they don't show the fun stuff anymore. The only other way at the time was to stay up late night and catch Fritz The Nite Owl's Double Chiller Theatre which delighted me with such cool stuff as Shrek of the Mutated, Wilford, House That Screamed, Twisted Brain (Horror High) and much more classic fright film fare. A true delight - up at bonheads at WBNS 10 TV let him go and the animals were never the same.

Vince Cornelius, California, Ohio (Images provided by Vince [at] hit with Fritz the Nite Owl]).

"DOPS: Last issue, in our anthology article we noted that neither Dead of Night or The Offspring were available on DVD. In fact, Dead of Night was released as part of a DVD feature with The Queen of Spades in 2003 (and is currently out of print and sells for upwards of \$40 on eBay), while The Offspring was made available under the A&E Home Video label in a Scary Movie (2005, WB)."

"Know Your HorrorHound" returns next issue.



## \* The HorrorHound Staff \*

**Publisher**  
JEREMY SHELDON

**Editor-in-Chief**  
NATHAN HANNEFMAN

**Managing Editor**  
AARON CROWELL

**Writer:**  
SEAN CLARK, PAUL DAVIS,  
JESSICA DWYER, JON KUTLEY,  
DAVID KOSANKE, MATT  
MOORE, KENNY NELSON,  
ERIC NEWELL, MIKE WASON

**Copy Editor**  
JESSICA BRUEWER

**Artists**  
TRAVIS FALLIGANT, NATE  
MILLNER, JEFF REINER,  
JOEL ROBINSON

**Advertising**  
GARY SHELDON  
gary@horrorhound.com

**Contributors:**  
ERIC AUSTIN, CLIVE BARKER,  
BETH at CUSTOM LEATHER,  
MICHAEL DOUGHERTY, RIGOLE  
EALK, DEADPET.COM, ADAM  
GALK & Co., MIGUEL XAVIER  
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ASHLEY POWELL, DENNIS  
PRINCE, PUTRID, MELISSA ROM-  
LEY, AMBER SALATINO, JOE  
SENA, ROBERT SLENDORN, PAT  
WANG, the crew from MOTFL, and  
everyone else who helped, but were  
unable to be named here.

\*All articles written by Aaron Crowell and Nathan Hannefman, unless specifically stated otherwise.

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Comedy and the living dead are strange bedfellows, but the relationship apparently works. While zombie films have stumbled back into popularity over the last decade, it's really in the last half of the 2000s that we've seen the comedic take on the genre really take off with its own gory-age of funny horror.

This zombie resurgence is due, in no small part, to the popularity of a little movie called *Shaun of the Dead*, but Edgar Wright and company weren't the first to see the funner side of walking corpses, and obviously they weren't the last. Over the years, other directors have mixed their own 245 Thxin cocktail of comedy and horror to infect their audiences with a case of laughter and fear.

Back in the '80s, films like

*Evil Dead 2* while focusing more on the supernatural aspects, included zombies of a sort, plenty of black comedy and flat out splatstick in the various ways actor Bruce Campbell was tortured and beaten up by the creatures (or by himself). But as we've heard, the real terror to Bruce was Sam Raimi and his gleeful abuse to get just the right shot.

For really dark, black humor-faced zombie-fare you really can't forget *Re-Animator*. Stuart Gordon's film based on the Herbert West stories by legendary author H.P. Lovecraft is a classic of modern horror that always has its tongue firmly planted in its decaying cheek. From the battle with Rufus, the undead cat, to Doctor Hill's first attempts to control his now headless body... there are twisted laughs a plenty.

Also during the '80s, one of the more familiar faces of zombies, that of a flesh hungry corpse, appearing in the form of the *Return of the Living Dead* series. Writer/director Dan O'Bannon found a great balance in the first film of comedy and chills, with a dash of weirdness. Most of the laughs came from the pining of actors James Karen and Thom Mathews as the two warehouse workers who unleash the brain hungry horde on the populace of Kentucky. The two were so beloved by fans of the movie that they were brought back to life, so to speak, in its sequel, which borrowed heavily from the first film, and heavily aimed up the humor!

The '90s saw even more comedic turns by the walking dead. This time around, a little known New Zealander by the name of Peter Jackson co-wrote and directed a film that would go down as one of the goriest and bloodiest zombie flicks of that decade called *Braindead*. Balancing out the over-the-top gore and puaa jokes, *Braindead* had an equal serving of comedic pudding and gallows humor, helped along by a great, sympathetic performance by lead actor, Timothy Balme.

Disney got into the act with their Touchstone Pictures release *My Boyfriend's Back*. The film starred Andrew Lowery as a high school student who dies, but comes back as a hungry zombie when his dream girl promises him a date to the prom. The comedy is in full swing here, and the cast is pretty astonishing by today's standards with Matthew Fox, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Edward Herrmann as co-stars.

Stoner comedy took a hit with the zombies in *Idle Hands*, a very underrated horror comedy starring Devon Sawa (*Final Destination*) and Jessica Alba, with soon to be zombies played by Seth Green and Elden Henson. The story deals with voodoo, the devil and a very naughty possessed hand. The film owes a lot to *Evil Dead 2* and is basically a love story/homage to Ash and his own hand's relationship.

In the last decade there have been more films jumping into the zombie fray with a smile on their faces and bloodstain in their eyes. *Shaun of the Dead* lumbered into the front line of this new age of zombie comedy and behind them lurked many minions of the genre. *Fido*, starring Billy Connolly as the title character, took a retro approach as well as taking a swing at the suburban ideal of the '50s. Set in an alternate history where zombies were tamed into servants with electronic collars, the movie had plenty of laughs in between a nice social commentary (something Romero always tried to do with his films).

*Dance of the Dead*, produced and directed by Gregg Bishop, tells the story of a

group of high school geeks and nerds that have to fight a horde of the undead that attack their school on prom night. Of course, if the sex-nerds who are left to save the day. The film has some bittersweet moments, but also shows that zombies do love music. *Boy Eats Girl* is another high school set zombie comedy, this time from Ireland. The movie is a bloodier, R-rated version of *My Boyfriend's Back*. A boy dies and returns cursed with a taste for human flesh while more zombies rise in the town. He has to fight his hunger to save the lives of his girlfriend and mates while trying to stay ahead of the undead.

Now as we get closer to the end of the decade, another comedy has entered the feeding frenzy of the zombie genre. Appropriately titled *Zombieland*, the new horror comedy by director Ruben Fleischer and written by Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick (writers on the *Joe Schmo Show*) the story is bigger and broader than most of its predecessors.

Set in an America that has been overwhelmed by a zombie plague, the film centers on a group of survivors who band together to try and stay alive. The characters' names are cities that they have come from, all except a girl named Maggie played by Amber Heard. Jesse Eisenberg stars as Columbus, Emma Stone is Wichita and Woody Harrelson stars at the guns and glory loving Tallahassee. The motley group manage to get into a theme park and hole up hoping they are safe from the plague outside, but their personality conflicts make them wonder which is worse... dealing with the zombies or each other.

Harrelson's character brings much of the comedy, reveling in the killing of zombies and searching for the last Twinkie on earth. He and Eisenberg's relationship is also a nice touch, with the younger man being the wimp and not wanting to deal with the nastier aspects of survival. There is also a much talked about, but little known cameo by comedian Billy Murray as one of the zombies. Add to that Harrelson's famous tangle after filming with a paparazzi where he punched the reporter and later blamed it on thinking the guy was a zombie, and you've got yourself a slice of dead gold (to borrow a phrase).

Director Ruben Fleischer and the film's writers all have backgrounds in the comedy genre, but none until now in the horror realm. Fleischer took some time to talk to us about the movie where he would neither confirm nor deny Murray's involvement even though the Web is plastered with the news of the ex-Ghostbuster joining the ranks of the other side.

**HorrorHound:** What made you want to do a zombie movie in a market where there are already so many?

**Ruben Fleischer:** I actually disagree. I don't think there are so many. In fact, in 2009, this is the only zombie movie that's being released. I don't think it's oversaturated. I think people love zombie movies and I think they are always popular. There's a core audience, but they also have the ability to broaden out to a wider audience.

So yeah, I think there's always time for zombie movies. This also isn't your typical zombie movie. This is way more of a zom-com where there are more grounded characters and a more traditional buddy-comedy-road movie structure than just a bunch of people running from zombies all the time. It's more about the people and their relationships more than it is about zombies... as much as it is about running from





and killing zombies

**HH:** Speaking of the zom-com thing, there are a lot of comparisons right now of this to *Shaun of the Dead*. What do you have to say to that?

**RF:** Well, it's really easy to see a similarity in that they are both zombie-comedies, but ... no one online has actually seen *Zombieland* so they are basing it purely on just the definition of it as a zombie-comedy. But you know I love *Shaun of the Dead*, it was an amazing movie. It was a big reference point as far as approaching *Zombieland*, but I did everything in my power to distinguish it from their movie. First of all, their movie takes place at the time of the start of the zombie outbreak as it's happening. Whereas our movie is post-apocalyptic, it's like two months after the outbreak, so it's more like *28 Days Later* or *28 Weeks Later* as far as the timeline. Also ... they used slow zombies and we use fast zombies which is a big difference, too.

I also feel their movie is more parody or more referencing existing zombie movies where our movie is more grounded in kind of ... just based on the real experiences of these real characters you know, in their own reality.

**HH:** So what type of myths do you use to explain the outbreak? Was it more like an

object from space, a toxic gas or more like *28 Days Later* where it was a viral outbreak?

**RF:** It's more like *28 Days Later* or like Zack Snyder's 2004 *Dawn of the Dead* where it is a viral outbreak and it just sort of infects people and turns them into sort of zombie like creatures.

**HH:** You have a vast background in comedy, do you think that helped get you in the director's chair of this film?

**RF:** Yeah, I think that definitely helped. I mean this movie is a comedy first and everything else second. So yeah, that definitely had a part in it. I would have to say that's what got me the job.

**HH:** Speaking to that, what's your favorite comedy and what's your favorite horror film?

**RF:** I think as far as comedy goes, is probably *Blues Brothers*. It's a buddy-comedy-road movie, so there's probably a parallel there to *Zombieland*. As far as horror movies, I would have to go with more of like *Rosemary's Baby*. I love that movie, I love the feeling of New York in that movie and the performances. Or *The Shining*, those are my two favorites.

**HH:** What was it like working with Woody Harrison?

**RF:** Woody's a pro and I learned a lot from him. He's really created an original character in Tallahassee. As a first time director, he was incredibly patient with me and accommodating. When you're working with someone with that sort of experience who's worked with all your idols like the Cohen brothers, Oliver Stone, Milos Forman, it can be intimidating. But he was with us 100 percent and down for anything we wanted to do.

He's just one of the coolest guys you'll ever meet. He's kinda figured life out and definitely lives it on his own terms. He's just a pleasure to work with.

**HH:** So, Bill Munny is listed in the credits as Zombie with a capital Z. Can you tell us how that happened and will there be any little winks or nods to *Ghostbusters*?

**RF:** You'll just have to see the movie. I'm actually not going to confirm he's even in it.

*Zombieland* hits theaters everywhere on October 9th.



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# REPACKING THE 1980s!

by Kenneth Nelson

## Sorority Row, Stepfather and Night of the Demons



It isn't news these days that pretty much any bankable horror title of day's past has been given a redux with a modern touch. So what makes the latest slew of remakes any different than their predecessors? Well for one thing, they are getting younger. We've seen plenty of films from the '70s re-imagined over the last several years, such as *Halloween* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. However, Hollywood has now set their sights on another decade of terror to capitalize on—the gory, glorious '80s. This fall, not one—but rather three(!) scare flicks from the 1980s will have their re-imagined entries unleashed to theaters. September 11th sees the release of *Sorority Row*, a remake of

but, the major difference this time out is that it is a fellow sorority sister who meets her untimely demise due to the prank, whereas the original saw the death of the sorority's housemother. As in the original, the "sisters" decide to keep the death a secret, not wanting to take responsibility and risk any punishment at the hands of the law. They agree to never speak of the incident, that is until after they all receive text messages with images of the bloodied murder weapon right after graduation. Someone knows their secret and soon begins to stalk and murder the sorority girls as well as anyone else in their way. Those who have seen the trailer should instantly catch on to the *I Know What You Did Last Summer* vibe, with the hooded killer even appearing reminiscent of the Fishermen. The cast includes some familiar, if not well known faces, such as Rumer Willis (daughter of Bruce Willis and Demi Moore) and Jamie Chung of MTV's *The Real World*. *Sorority Row* certainly appears to have the goods necessary to surpass its predecessor. The flick looks well-polished, has already received a very important R-rating, and features lots of beautiful college girls. Sure, the story doesn't look like it will be breaking any new ground, but it isn't as though the original wasn't predictable. If the film manages to follow the always successful books and blood formula, then it may just be a winner. Chances it's better than the original: 50 percent.

In the updated version of *The Stepfather*, a teenage boy named Michael arrives back home after a stint in military school to discover his mother is madly in love and already living with her new boyfriend David, played by Dylan Walsh (NipTuck). David soon gets engaged to Michael's mother (the film is called *The Stepfather* after all), but appears too good to be true, and soon begins to overstep his bounds and reveal his true colors. After becoming increasingly apprehensive of the new man in his mother's life, Michael's suspicions peak when he becomes aware of a police sketch on

1983's *The House on Sorority Row*. The following month, October 9th to be precise, comes the remake of the 1986 cult classic, *Night of the Demons*. October 16th completes the trinity of regurgitated '80s horror with the release of *The Stepfather*, a remake of the 1987 flick of the same name.

Another noteworthy aspect of this latest crop of horror pictures being tackled for the second time around is that the titles aren't widely renowned classics. With Hollywood running out of the more well-known and bankable titles such as *Friday*, the 13th or *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, the studios have chosen to continue re-fashing the horror films of yesterday for today's audiences. Several questions arise from this latest strategy. First, will the hardcore horror fans become a little more open to the idea of a lesser-known and revered film being given a new treatment? Sure, a film like *The House on Sorority Row* has its own cult fan base, but most fans certainly aren't as devoted to it as they are to a picture like *Halloween*. This segues into the next question—will fans finally be given remakes that consistently surpass their predecessor in quality? Let's face it, when a classic horror film is re-imagined it is very difficult to recreate the wheel or fix what isn't broken. Although a film like *Night of the Demons* isn't bad by any means, it certainly doesn't take a rocket scientist to determine that it stands a much better chance at being successfully re-imagined than a critically-acclaimed picture like *The Exorcist*. The last question to consider is will these lesser known titles be as eye-catching on a theater's marquee as something like *The Hit*, *Have Eyes* or *Dawn of the Dead*? To date, studios have managed to recreate films that people generally have a recollection of. The average joe may have never seen a film like the original *Amityville Horror*, but there is a familiarity with the title that certainly grabs a viewer's attention when they see a poster for such a remake hanging in front of their local multiplex. Whether or not a film like *Stepfather* will be able to resuscitate that lost connection in one's mind and successfully stimulate the curiosity about a new release remains to be seen. Now that all the logistics are squared away, let's take a look at this latest trio of remakes and see how each flick measures up.

Sounding feisty true to its source material, *Sorority Row* tells the tale of five sorority girls from Theta Pi who play a prank which goes horribly awry. With all of the girls in on the joke, one of the sorority sisters plays dead in order to freak out her boyfriend as payback for recently cheating on her. As they all travel to dump the "body," the girls suggest dismembering their sorority sister before they dispose of her remains. However, the joke goes too far when the boyfriend, who actually thinks his lover is dead, pierces her chest with a fire iron and actually kills the girl. Off the



Dylan Walsh  
Stepfather and  
NipTuck

insanity of the killer who strongly resembles his future stepfather. Predictably, David soon snaps and begins to go after his new family one by one. The trailer for *Stepfather* gives away far too much of the plot which could hinder the potential success of this film. In addition, the remake is rated PG-13 which doesn't stand to please too many fans of the original R-rated flick. With the rating in mind, it is unlikely that gore will be a factor, so the film's success will greatly depend on whether or not ample tension is created as the story unfolds. Dylan Walsh can play an intense role as fans of *NipTuck* have surely seen glimpses of in the past, so the picture will ultimately ride on his shoulders as to whether or not he can convincingly portray the insanity of the titular stepfather. Chances it's better than the original: 20 percent.

Out of the three soon-to-be-released remakes mentioned in this article, the one getting the most buzz amongst fans is certainly *Night of the Demons*. The original featured a bunch of teens having a Halloween bash at an abandoned mortuary

whom, after performing a seance, become possessed by demons one by one. The remake follows the same basic premise, although the action is shifted to the Broussard Mansion in New Orleans. Of course the mansion is home to demons which need to break an ancient curse by possessing seven vessels, in other words—the sex and drug crazed youths partying it up at the mansion. The original had a certain cheesy '80s charm to it with creepy atmosphere, decent gore (who can forget the lipstick scene?), sick humor and a punk rock sensibility akin to *The Return of the Living Dead*. Fortunately, the redux appears to be in good hands having been co-written by Adam Gersbach and Jace Anderson with Gersbach directing. Gersbach's last direc-







tonal effort, *Autopsy* (one of last year's After Dark Horrorfest features), was very reminiscent in style to '80s horror and relied heavily on practical special effects. Fans may also recall that Anderson and Gierasch recently wrote Dario Argento's *The Mother of Tears*, which although a flawed film on many levels, certainly delivered with controversial, twisted and disgusting subject matter. The duo will, if nothing else, push the envelope of good taste which is exactly what a remake of *Night of the Demons* should do. It has already been announced that punk rock outfit 45 Grave, famous to horror fans for their "party time" song in *The Return of the Living Dead*, will be contributing a theme song for the film.

In addition, the feature has assembled a very impressive cast, including the likes of Edward Furlong (*Terminator 2*), Shannon Elizabeth (*American Pie*), Monica Keena (*Freddy vs. Jason*), Tiffany Shopp (*Nightmare Man*) and Dora Baird (*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning*). Scream queen Umea Quigley, who starred in the original *Night of the Demons* as well as countless other horror films is also set to make a cameo appearance in the redux, a move sure to please many fans. With that being said, it is pretty safe to say that this new incarnation of *Night of the Demons* has a good shot of at least living up to, if not surpassing its predecessor. Chances it's better than the original 60 percent.

In the eyes of HorrorHounds, the most important aspect of any remake is its quality. But quality doesn't always equal a good box office return. Out of the three films discussed in this article, *Stepfather* clearly has an advantage in the money making department since it is rated PG-13 and therefore can be shown to a wider audience—just look how

well *Prom Night* did! *Sorcery Row*, which was originally scheduled for an October release, has now been pushed up to September. Only time will tell if the move away from the busy Halloween season will benefit this horror remake financially. Most interesting is *Night of the Demons*, a film which one would expect to do very well with a wide release during the Halloween season. Unfortunately, it is looking more and more likely that *Night of the Demons* will only be receiving a limited theatrical release this October.

Undoubtedly, it will be very interesting to see how all three of these remakes turn out in both quality and financial success. If they fare well at the box office, perhaps studios will continue to remake more and more horror films which aren't all that old. If they all end up being widely recognized as better than the films which they are based on, then maybe studios will focus more attention on remaking horror flicks which are more deserving and in need of a re-imagining than those which are already cherished by fans and don't appear to need a fresh spin on the tale which they have already told.

Regardless of how it all plays out, horror fans will still have the originals to watch over and over again and to compare to their modern day counterparts. And for those who continue to maintain a negative perspective on re-hashed horror, at least it usually winds up giving you a solid DVD release of the original film (for instance, *The Stepfather* is being released on DVD for the first time ever on October 13th, with *The Stepfather 2* being rereleased in SE format). In the meantime, we'll just have to hold out hope that these twice told tales of terror end up being worth seeing a second time around.

# HORROR TABS!

Horror fans love to ink memorabilia to their favorite icons and movie titles to their skin, and what better way to display said art than sending pics to HorrorHound for inclusion in our Horror Tabs section! Here is an awesome array of body art sent to us over this past few months! Send us your tabs today by e-mailing them to [mail@horrorhound.com](mailto:mail@horrorhound.com)!



Here is the art of J-Deth (Deth Guro), an artist from southern Florida! Deth sent a very nice letter along with a few pics of his work - including Leatherface, London After Midnight and The Bride of Frankenstein!



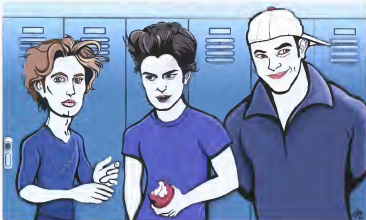
Josh Frederick of Kansas sent a snail of his awesome Joel Robinson inspired piece which first appeared in *HorrorHound* magazine! Great commitment and a great horror! Thanks Josh!



Above: Terry Taylor of Kansas sent these last two pics, which include an *Evil Dead* piece done by Dan Diltner and Herbert West, done by Gary Bardsell! Thanks for sharing the art, and artists!



Left: Mike Kinney's colorful *Friday Night* piece!



"THAT'S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT THESE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS, MAN. I DON'T GET OLDER, THEY STAY THE SAME AGE...YES THEY DO."

**Fun Fact:** 1986's *Night of the Demons* budget was set at around \$1.2 million, with its 2009 remake set at an estimated \$10 million.

by Jessica Dwyer



Kids seem to understand monsters more so than the adults of the world. In film and books especially, we see it's the children that befriend the beasts instead of running away or screaming. It's always the adults who want to shoot first and ask questions later. Maybe it's the innocence that children have or maybe it's the fact they can see past the monsters' exterior and recognize that bit of humanity that adults have lost the ability to see. Or maybe, it's just the pure magic that can be found in the monsters themselves.

The first encounter with monsters for many people my age came in the form of a book that didn't vilify the creatures, but celebrated them. It was called *Where the Wild Things Are*, written

and illustrated by Maurice Sendak. Shot in Australia, Jonze tweaked some of the book's elements. In the film, Max is unhappy that his mother has invited her boyfriend over. After some rebellious acts he's sent to his room and there he finds himself in the world of the Wild Things.

Jonze cast unknown actor Max Records as young Max. He looks to have stepped out of the pages of the book into reality. The rest of the cast is peppered with well-known actors whose voices give life to the Wild Things. James Gandolfini, Forest Whitaker, and Tom Noonan, just to name a few.

The supporting cast is also very impressive, with Catherine Keener, who was nominated for a Golden Globe for her work with Jonze previously on *Being John Malkovich*, as Max's beleaguered mother, Mark Ruffalo, who played Inspector David Tschin in *Zodiac*, is the boyfriend that causes Max so many problems.

The film has taken nearly three years to complete. Jonze, to keep a vibe of surrealism to the movie, filmed much of it with hand-held cameras. The effect, watching these creatures actually running about while in the wild, feels like peeking into someone's dream without them knowing.

Much like the upcoming Disney film *Alice in Wonderland*, *Where the Wild Things Are* is a mixture of CGI and reality. The monsters themselves are actors in foam suits, some nine feet tall, with computer generated faces and expressions.

The movie has had its share of rumors and issues since it was announced. There was, at one time, buzz that it was never going to be released (it was originally scheduled for fall of '08). There was also talk on the Net that Warner Bros. was going to have the entire film reshot with a different director. None of this was the case, and the studio has stood by Jonze and allowed him to seemingly create his vision of the classic book. Reaction started getting very loud on the Web when a short clip leaked online a year ago that showed Max walking with one of the monsters. It was impressive and stirred a positive fan response. Now with the release of the official trailers and the showing of footage at Comic-Con this past July, fans are clamoring to see the finished work.

*Where the Wild Things Are* is still one of the most beloved children's books of all time and its imagery is forever etched into the minds of nearly everyone who's visited a library or read it as a child. Jonze has brought to life those beautiful pictures with the help of a great crew of artists that include Adam Keenan (*Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) and John Nolan (*Heavenly Creatures*). The *Golden Army* and producers like Tom Hanks. Those waiting for the finished product will not be disappointed.

As said, for many fans of horror their first experience with the monsters came from this classic children's book. It holds a place of honor in hearts and minds of monster fans, young and old alike. We've all been that little kid who wanted, just for a little while, to get wild and have fun, to growl and howl at the moon and not have to worry about the responsibility that our parents wanted us to have. We wanted to have fun and we'd retreat into our own world where monsters were our friends and we were their ruler. And we still do it to this day, only the creatures have a bit more bite or claw to them. But even, now deep down inside, we're still that little kid partying with the monsters and howling at the moon.

In theaters this October 16th, *Where the Wild Things Are* will be around to instill that love of monsters for many generations to come, and Jonze's film will help keep that legacy alive. Here's to the monsters and Max, may they always howl!



and illustrated by Maurice Sendak. The title went on to become one of the most popular children books of all time. In the book we are told the story of a boy named Max. Like many young boys his age, Max is a troublemaker who dresses up (as a wolf) and causes problems for his parents, chases the family dog and growls like a beast. He gets sent to bed without his supper after his mom has had enough of his behavior.

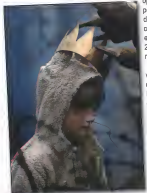
In his room, however, is where he finds himself transported into a magical place filled with giant monsters, horned and furry creatures called The Wild Things. Max befriends these creatures and is soon made their leader.

The monsters in the book are fearsome things, but they are really gentle, sweet and loving. Max feels at home with these creatures, and through him, the reader (and many children over the years) realize that the different don't necessarily have to be scary. We also feel at home with these beautiful monsters, and many now-grown fans of the book would wish to have chosen to stay on the island with the Wild Things.

One of the now-grown-up children who read the book is director Spike Jonze. Jonze who is known for his surrealistic films (*Three Kings*, *Being John Malkovich*) and music videos (*Subotage* by the Beastie Boys, *Weapon of Choice* by Fatboy Slim) seems a perfect choice for the project. Jonze's version isn't the first filmed attempt to create the world of the Wild Things. An animated version of the book was done in 1973 while in 1983 Disney tried to create a CGI version, but it never went anywhere. Musical and dance interpretations seemed to fare better, with a children's opera composed by Oliver Knussen performed a few times since its debut in 1980. Sendak himself and composer Randall Woolf even created a ballet version in 1997 while in 2004 the Chicago Company did a musical version of the book.

But the road to the film version has been a long and hard one. Filmmakers (besides Disney) have been trying to get the film produced for a number of years. The project has gone through many versions, animated and live action, none having seen the light of day. Some in the movie picture community said that a live action version would be unfilmable.

But in 2006, Jonze began filming his and co-writer Dave Egger's version of the book, with



# CHARLES BAND'S FULL MOON HORROR ROAD SHOW 2009

"It was a great evening... It felt like an old style variety hour show, but with boobs and gore!"

- Ain't It Cool News

"It was a blast. Sheer frickin' fun!"

- Ain't It Cool News

"Charles Band packs his show to the brim with puppets, creatures and rare film clips!"

- Dallas Observer

"The world of maniacal puppets... the mad ringmaster of this demented circus"

- BlogCritics Chris Benmouni

"Comedy!! Girls takin their tops off!! Costumes!! Girls takin their tops off!! Full Moon actors!! and most importantly... that's right...girls takin their tops off!!"

- Blammo

"Charles Band is one of the coolest and nicest entertainers I've ever had the pleasure of seeing live. And I'd see him again....for the women, too.... Last night was a riot!!... one great night of fun!!"

- Blammo

"A good time surrounded by like-minded weirdos"

- Goblins

"Band is an engaging guy with a lot of good stories to tell."

- GoMonsterGo

"Band's variety show is a horror and Halloween-palooza"

- DreadCentral

"so many like-minded geeks gathered in one place to grovel at the altar of homicidal puppets and murderous dolls"

- GoodRoof

SURPRISE GUEST APPEARANCES  
CRAZY COSTUME HOT CHICKS  
UNIQUE MERCHANDISE & ADULT ITEMS  
AWESOME AUDIENCE PARTICIPATIONS



## 18 CITY FULL MOON HORROR ROAD SHOW CITIES AND DATES!!!

San Diego, CA; September 30th  
San Antonio, TX; October 7th  
Mobile, AL; October 10th  
Columbia, SC; October 15th  
Silver Springs, MD; October 18th  
Columbus, OH; October 23rd  
St. Louis, MO; October 26th

Tempe, AZ; October 1st  
Houston, TX; October 8th  
Tallahassee, FL; October 11th  
Raleigh, NC; October 16th  
Buffalo, NY; October 21st  
Indianapolis, IN; October 24th  
Madison, WI; October 28th

Albuquerque, NM; October 4th  
Baton Rouge, LA; October 9th  
Athens, GA; October 14th  
Richmond, VA; October 17th  
Pittsburgh, PA; October 22nd  
Chicago, IL; October 25th

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO [WWW.FULLMOONDIRECT.COM](http://WWW.FULLMOONDIRECT.COM)!!!

Lots of announcements from the San Diego Comic-Con this past July, including Tim Burton's disclosure to *HorrorHound* that his next project will indeed be *Dark Shadows*, which is set to star Johnny Depp. This project has been talked about for years, and will hopefully see release in the later half of 2010.

Sam Raimi also revealed at the Con his final plans for the *Evil Dead* series. Look for Ash to return to the big screen as part of a series reboot (yes, that means remake). No word on when this film begins production, except for the revelation that Sam Raimi will in fact be directing this relaunch. We assume it will film sometime after *Spider-Man 4* is completed (Raimi's next project).

In what is becoming a bad joke, trumping Warner Bros.' treatment of *Trick 'r Treat*, Universal announced that *The Wolf Man* will once again see a date change, being pushed back from its November 6th release date to a now-February slot. This marks the fourth time *The Wolf Man* has been pushed back, but is also highlighted by a series of never-ending reshoots and production problems.

**Resident Evil: Afterlife** is expected to start filming later this year, the fourth installment of the video game-turned-movie franchise. Not much has been revealed about this project thus far, outside the fact that it will follow the events from "Extinction," most likely star Mills Jovovich and a rumor that Paul W.S. Anderson will return to write and direct (having stepped away from the director's chair since the very first feature film).

In an effort to condense as much remake news as possible, we have the following scope: Darren Lynn Bousman is prepping his remake of Charles Kaufman's *Mother's Day*, which will see a 2010 release (on *Mother's Day*, of course). *Child's Play* remake news has heated up with a possible production start-date on the horizon (with Don Mancini set to direct), and *Motel Hell*, which was originally touted as a 2009 release, is still in development with MGM set to release it, possibly in 2010. Also, Alex Winter is filming a remake to *The Gate* and a new *Crew* feature film reboot is in the works.

## An American Werewolf in London

It seemed like a lifetime ago that work began on *HorrorHound* #4. Writer Paul Davis started fiddling away at an exciting cover-story retrospective on one of the greatest werewolf movies of all time - *An American Werewolf in London*. Halfway through completion of the piece, Paul commented that he was thinking about turning his attention toward producing a documentary on the film. His article stirred the primordial goo of what would soon shape into a three-year journey, hunting down every cast and crew member from this 20-year-old film, in an attempt to produce one of the most entertaining feature-length docs presented for a single film. At first, the thought of completing the project to show at film fests and possibly air on TV in London (Paul's home) was the colossal (and possibly unattainable) goal. Soon enough, having befriended director John Landis, and with the dual push of Universal's upcoming *Wolf Man* feature film remake, along with the upstart of an exciting new home video medium (Blu-ray), Paul was smack dab in the middle of negotiating the inclusion of *Beware the Moon: Remembering An American Werewolf in London* on all US and international releases of the Landis original as it was prepped for hi-def re-release! Ask the directors of such docs as *The Shark Is Still Working (Jaws)*, *The Psycho Legacy* and *Spine Tinger: The William Castle Story*... this luck and cooperation with a major studio does not occur often - if at all. Paul notes of the doc's beginnings, "When we (Romy Alford - producer, Anthony Bueno - cinematographer/editor and myself) set out to make *Beware the Moon*, it was always with a 'let the chips fall where they may' attitude. We knew going into it that it was going to be an uphill struggle with regard to getting clips licensed etc. ... so for it to be approved by Universal upon completion and to be added on the Blu-ray and Full Moon edition DVD ... we couldn't have asked for a better outcome."

Now set for release on September 15th, *An American Werewolf in London* will be issued with a new 1080p transfer, loaded with such extras (aside from *Beware the Moon*) as *I Walked with a Werewolf* featurette, *Making An American Werewolf in London*, an interview with John Landis, make-up artist Rick Baker on "AWL," *Casting of the Hand Reellette*, storyboards, outtakes, photo montage (packed with rare and never-



before-seen shots) and a feature commentary with stars David Naughton and Griffin Dunne (commentary and various other extras reaped from the previously-released DVD incarnation). Commenting on the completion of the doc and the excitement in working on it, Paul says, "Oh man, the whole thing has been a roller coaster. We were invited to Rick Baker's studio, Bob Baker's legendary prop collection ... these are all memories for life. I think the biggest thing for me was meeting and collaborating with John Landis. This is the first guy that I ever knew of as a director through *The Making of Thriller*. So to work with one of my heroes was pretty cool. John was and continues to be encouraging and inspirational, and I can't wait for him to start work on his new movie *Burke & Hare* in the UK. It's been too long for him ... he deserves to be back behind the camera." In regard to "BTM's" release, Paul says, "The fact that it's done and it's about to spread all over the world is exciting. I'm really looking forward to hearing back from fans once it's out there because first and foremost we made this as fans of the film. We made something that we would want to see ourselves, so the biggest thumbs up for us would be if the fans of the movie are happy with it."

John Landis also revealed this past July that *An American Werewolf in London* will be joining virtually every other popular horror film of the '80s with its own remake, set to go into production by the end-of-year. No word on what Landis's involvement with this reboot will be, however, producer is almost guaranteed.

## BLU-RAY



As fall announcements heat up, so does the prospect of exciting new hi-def transfers of our favorite films! On top of *An American Werewolf in London* (above), we have presented a sampling of some of the most exciting reissued horror films to look forward to on

Blu-ray over the next couple months! *Army of Darkness* (Screwhead edition from Universal, Sept. 15th), MGM's *Child's Play* (Sept. 15th), *The Living Dead at Manchester Morgue* (Blue Underground, Oct. 27th), *The Ninth Gate* (Umgate, Aug. 11th), *Shaun of the Dead* (Universal,

Sept. 22nd), and *Van Helsing* (Universal, Sept. 16th), all come packed with bonus features and enhanced picture, making them worth that double-digit. Also look for BDs of *Wrong Turn*, the *Hannibal Lecter Trilogy*, *Ghost Ship* and *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*.

# THERE'S NO ESCAPING THE HORRORS THAT LIE WITHIN

## PERSONAL DEMONS

Gregory Lamberson

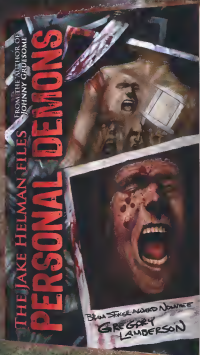
Horror

October 2009

Jake Helman, an elite member of the New York Special Homicide Task Force, faces what every cop dreads—an elusive serial killer. While investigating a series of bloodletting sacrifice rituals executed by an ominous perpetrator known as the Cipher, Jake refuses to submit to a drug test and resigns from the police department. Tower International, a controversial genetic engineering company, employs him as their director of security.

While battling an addiction to cocaine, Jake enters his new high-pressure position in the private sector. What he encounters behind the closed doors of this sinister operation is beyond the realm of human imagination. Too horrible to contemplate, the experimentation is pure madness, the outcome a hell where only pain and terror reside. Nicholas Tower is not the hero flaunted on the cover of Time magazine. Beneath the polished exterior of this frontiersman on the cutting edge of science is a corporate executive surrounded by the creations of his deranged mind.

As Jake delves deeper into the hidden sphere of this frightening laboratory, his discoveries elicit more than condemnation for unethical practices performed for the good of mankind. Sequestered in rooms veiled in secrecy is the worst crime the world will ever see—the theft of the human soul.



## IMOLA

Richard Satterlie

Horror

September 2009

Agnes Hahn is a serial killer. She murders and mutilates men for sexual thrills... just to even the score. When Agnes was a child, her abusive father molested and killed her twin sister, Lilin. Agnes watched, vulnerable and horrified, while her counterpart suffered and paid the ultimate price for defenseless innocence. That was the end of one existence, but the beginning of another.

Within the sequestered confines of Imola, a treacherous mental institution where patients prey like deprived predators, Lilin poses no further danger to society. Afflicted by dissociative identity disorder, Agnes believes she is no one. Lilin wants all men to die.

Jason Powers comprehends the agony Agnes endures behind the walls of Imola. A reporter with the San Francisco Chronicle, his investigative skills cracked the case that brought Lilin into custody. Against all reason, Jason adores Agnes, a gentle, sensual woman in the clutches of a violent personality she cannot control. Then Lilin escapes, dictating Agnes's every move, ready to kill again. Only Jason has sufficient knowledge to intervene and prevent the slaying of the helpless victims Lilin will dismember in her bloody rampage. In the process, he must risk his own life to save the woman he loves from herself.



Also by Richard Satterlie:  
AGNES HAHN



by Aaron Crowell



Scary children are no strangers to the horror genre with the release of so many classic killer kid flicks over the decades. However, pregnancy is a bit more taboo in that directors have only just begun to delve deeper into the subject matter. *Baby Blood* (1980), *Inside* (2007) and *Baby Blues* (2008) are all hard hitting examples of shocking films that have helped pave the way for *Grace* and first-time feature film director Paul Solet. In *Grace* we meet Madeline Matheson, played by Jordan Ladd, a vegan beauty who simply wants to have a child of her own. Since she and her husband, Vivian Matheson (Gabrielle Rose), had not yet conceived, they remained steadfast in their efforts. In the

opening sex scene, it's very apparent that Madeline seems to care more about having a child than the love making process with her husband. In fact, she seems a million miles away. After the couple finish copulation, she raises her legs above her head to help promote reproduction (a similar scene can be seen in *The Big Lebowski*), a practice common with women who are trying to insure gestation. After receiving the good news that she is pregnant, we meet Dr. Patricia Lang (Samantha Fems), a midwife specifically chosen by Madeline who will help her have the baby in a safe natural warm environment. Soon enough a car accident leads to the death of the unborn child and husband Vivian, leaving poor Madeline distorted to the point of wanting to take the child to term despite the depressing reality of the situation. You read correctly... she wants to give birth to a dead baby. Creepy, right? It gets even better... upon finally delivering the deceased baby, Madeline embraces her daughter's frail lifeless body, as Dr. Patricia tells her she can not will the child back to life, but much to her surprise, it begins to cry and move. The child is named *Grace* and alas she is no ordinary newborn, she has special needs and a very unique trait.

This is the instant intrigue that catapults this artistically character driven horror film to the head of the class. When it was first screened at the Sundance Film Festival two male viewers fainting! Producer Adam Green revealed, "And now, just three weeks ago, there was another screening at UCLA and somebody fainted in the bathroom there and broke two fingers and their chin. When we heard about it... the guy was nice enough to send in his medical pictures and everything. Because the first thing we said was 'No one is going to believe us. Oh it's a horror movie, it's a hoax, they're just doing it to promote shit.'"

Is this film truly that shocking? Director Paul Solet originally shot *Grace* as a short film back in 2006 and entered it into several film festivals where it took top honors winning both the DragonCon Short Film Festival's Peer Choice Award and Best Short at

the Rhode Island International Horror Film Festival. This only fueled Paul's passion to take *Grace* to the next level as he was already known for promoting his short film by wandering around with a dead baby prop in a carrier strapped to his chest. This act generated a great deal of attention for Paul, but didn't do much to help ensure his film would reach the next level. Enter director/producer Adam Green (*Hatched*) who explained what attracted him to *Grace*: "There's a lot of things that attracted me to this project. When I started to have a lot of success, before the fan mail even starts, every other aspiring filmmaker tries to send you their thing. One point I'd like to make clear in this article is that before I start telling a story about how I made somebody's movie for them, that's so not usually how it happens and not the way to go. To get somebody to make your movie, you need to get it in front of production people and financiers and producers with ties to studios and money, but if you're a writer and director trying to get your stuff in front of another writer and director there's usually nothing to come of that."



other than maybe legally if they can read it, they can say I like it or I don't like it. In this instance though, I had run into Paul Solet several times out on the convention circuit when I was out promoting *Hatched* and I never really talked to him, but I would see him hustling his first short film out in the parking lot with a dead baby strapped to him. It turns out he grew up a few towns over from me, he's younger than me, but we've both got the same kind of east coast work ethic, he was there day and night trying to pitch his stuff just like I did and I respected that a lot. Cause you see other people going around saying I wrote this script, why doesn't anybody want to make it? I can do better than anybody else and I'm so great! He never did that. He never even asked me for anything. So finally, out of courtesy, I asked somebody that knew him if I could read the feature screenplay for *Grace*. And it really blew me away. It was such an original horror film, and it's a smart horror film that really bothers you on a different level. Which is sort of my M.O. in trying to champion the underdog and the original idea in the genre. Cause if I die tomorrow or if I die in 50 years, the one thing I want to be remembered for is that I actually did something to help the fans of our genre, and I didn't just cash in on any horror film I could get paid on. When I read it, I looked at the other guys at my company, and I said, "You do realize that nobody in their right mind would take this movie?" And they said yeah, and I said, "that's exactly why we have to do it." It happened at a time when *Hatched* was just becoming the biggest selling hit for Anchor Bay of all time. So Anchor Bay came to us and asked us What else do you guys want to do? We want to do another movie with you soon. So if Paul had given me his script a week before or a week later it never would have happened. But the timing was just so right that I put that forward instead of one of my own projects, and told them that I'd oversee the whole thing. I'd make sure the movie was great, don't worry about it."

Green continued discussing the difficulties faced while shooting *Grace* as a feature. "The biggest hurdle, which is most often the case with these films, is the budget. Because you go there with all these visions and all these plans for how you want to do it, and all of a sudden your 30-day shoot has been out down to 24 days, and so you make the most of it. And then after that you find out it's now only 15 days, and then during a weekend of shooting you find out it's going to be 17 days now, and your cutting scenes out and your doing everything you can to get it together. Thankfully, the crew was on board, everyone who was there was a horror fan who was excited they were working on it, and there was just a lot of pride that went into the film."

Paul Solet proves he is a director who knows what it takes to make an emotional-



Jordan Ladd embraces baby Grace.

ly charged horror film with organic performances. Here the director reveals how he came to cast Jordan Ladd for the lead. "Jordan is someone I've watched since *Cabin Fever*. El [Roth] has been a friend since I was a little boy, so I watched his journey on that film, and remember hearing such great things about her. You can't not have a crush on Jordan Ladd. She's just someone it's impossible not to like. And that's exactly what we needed for the Madeline character. This can't be a character you're able to write off as a kook, because she's going to make some unorthodox decisions and an audience has got to be able to stay with her. If they don't, I've failed at my job. With Jordan, that's exactly what you got." Adam Green adds: "I think Paul did so much leg work with Jordan specifically that everybody knew what was going on when they got on set. There was never a moment where an actor had too much or had trouble getting her to where she needed to be. Because Jordan is pretty much the entire movie. There's other characters in it that are just brilliantly played because everybody in the movie wants something they can't have... and kinda makes them all rotten, except for Jordan who is the good person put into the rotten situation. And

Paul did a brilliant job preparing everyone for that." And let us not forget the amazing score for the film composed by Austin Wintory. The 2008 Hollywood Music Awards winner for Best New Film Composer (and good friend of Solet's) exhibits his brilliance in scoring *Grace*, aided by vocalist Leabeth Scott (Passion of the Christ) who wrote and composed the subtle lullaby heard in the film. Wintory even vested the set to record sounds from within the house that were then turned into haunting instruments that give the composition of the score a truly unique and disturbing sonority. Even real flies and damrats can be heard adding to the unsettling atmosphere and events that transpire.

Look for *Grace* to hit DVD on September 15, 2009 from Anchor Bay complete with tons of great bonus features including: commentary track, multiple featurettes, including: *Grace: At Sundance*, *Grace: Delivery*, *Grace: Family*, *Hor Mother's Eyes*, *The Look of Grace*, *Lullaby*, scoring *Grace*, plus the trailer and screenplay (DVD-Rom). The Blu-ray will also drop sometime later this fall.

## CONCEIVING GRACE WITH DIRECTOR PAUL SOLET

by Aaron Crowell with Chrissie Thornburg

**HorrorFreak:** *Grace* appears to play out like a cautionary tale reminding us to be careful what we wish for, or at least in Madeline's case. Was this intentional?

**Paul Solet:** It's definitely a study of the idea of violating the will of the universe—how you can often get what you want if you try hard enough, even if it's not the right thing, but not without consequence. There's certainly something being said about the power of a mother's love, and the different approaches and motives behind it. The protagonist's love is coming from a more selfless place than the antagonist's, although they'd both tell you they are doing what they're doing for the sake of the child.

**HF:** You clearly wanted to get a reaction from the audience. Was it more important to scare them or creep them out?

**PS:** I think it's really a dance between the two. You're always looking to keep the audience off balance, to play with their expectations. So when they're expecting shock, you throw them tension, when they're expecting a build, you hit them with a scare. The one can't exist without the other and still be nearly as effective. There's a real rhythm to it, that's part of the joy of genre film making.

**HF:** While Madeline lives a very healthy vegan lifestyle, *Grace* clearly is not a vegan. Did you seek to make this contrast, was this a statement in regards to the primitive urge in us all to eat meat, manifesting in baby *Grace* from deep from within Madeline's repressed subconscious?

**PS:** I'm not really trying to say anything about dietary or lifestyle choices, I could give a shit what people eat. My job is to tell a story and entertain, and to do that effectively, you have to establish a character arc for your protagonist. Starting Madeline as a vegan, a woman who literally won't kill a fly, simply gives you more room to arc, and makes the eventual sacrifice she makes that much more powerful and effective.

**HF:** The musical score for *Grace* was brilliantly delivered by Austin Wintory. What percent of a horror film's appeal and success do you attribute to its score?

**PS:** That's always tough to quantify, but it is absolutely crucial, especially in a film like *Grace* that is so reliant on atmosphere and tone and character. Austin is a genius. I really don't know that word around, but he's a genuine prodigy. He had scored a hundred times before he was 22 years old. He works harder and faster and more effectively than anyone I've ever met, and he's a tremendous collaborator. I don't see myself ever working with another composer.

**HF:** *Grace* is kind of a slow burn with limited jump scares, intense moments of ultra chunky gore and violence. Do you feel its atmospheric formula can successfully reach the younger, and more commonly impetuous, run of the mill Horrorhounds as successfully as it has reached the more critically sophisticated cinema based fans and critics?

**PS:** Absolutely. I've seen this film play to dozens of audiences from Sundance to Dallas, to Glasgow, to France, and it plays just as powerfully to every crowd.

I've seen clips from the film reduce hardened horror audiences to tears at genre conventions, and I've seen it make more academic crowds pass out. Do I think it's going to make a horror crowd piss out? Well, I'll be ashamed of you if it does. We don't pass out from violence, we cheer. It's just how we're wired. But I come at this as a fan first, always, and I know *Grace* is a movie that I want to see, as a horror fan. That's the best way to gauge it. How you feel watching the movie. I have a lot of faith in our community. We spend so much time bitching about not getting original stuff, but when we do, we back it. We have unity in this sense that you just don't find in traditional drama or in comedy. We seriously care about this shit. We live it and we breathe it. I wake up thinking about how to scare the shit out of us, I work on making it happen all day, then I go to sleep and dream about it. Yeah, we're gonna get this one.

**HF:** As a male director, what attracted you to a woman's issue for a horror film?

**PS:** I've always been surrounded by strong women, my mom being the first example. This movie's cast and crew is loaded with exceptionally strong, powerful women. I love horror movies like they're my own family, but I've never understood where we came up with the convention of alienating half of our audience. It's just silly and juvenile and sells the genre short. Real horror is horror that works not just on a single demographic, but on humanity. Horror for everyone, that gets under your skin as much as it does your girlfriend's or your mother's or your sister's. That was the aim with *Grace*. Not to make a film for a female audience, but to make a film for men and women alike. The way I see it, *Grace* is an exploration of love in the arena of genre. Love isn't a woman's issue. Just remember, of the three people that have passed out at *Grace* screenings, not one of them was a woman.

**HF:** Could you explain how you got so many flies in one place for the crib scenes?

**PS:** Fly wrangling is an art. We had a fly wrangler named Flo. She had a plastic bucket full of flies and maggots that she carried around. It said "Flo's Maggots" on it. She kept it in the freezer. You can freeze them, which puts them out, and then let them thaw, and as they come to they start to walk before they fly away. You can also blow smoke at them, which stuns them a bit. Flo is a master.

**HF:** Animal imagery seems to be a strong background theme in *Grace*, I heard in an interview, your next film, *BSH*, is a cross between *Reservoir Dogs* and *Cujo*. Can you give us more insight into the project?

**PS:** I'm not supposed to say anything about *BSH*, unfortunately, but I will say, this movie will make *Cujo* look like *Benji*. I'm a huge animal lover. I have [a] codependent relationship with my doberman, Molly Millions. I used to train dogs. It's just a world I'm very personally involved with. If I meet a beautiful woman and her dog, I will inevitably remember that the dog's name is Lassie, but will not even remember the girl's name. Animals are right up there with movies for me as far as things that I absolutely live for are concerned. Bringing the two together is pretty natural for me.





## NIGHT OF THE CRAPPY-DVD COVERS

At the end of June, Sony Home Video announced a special online contest (located at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)) in which horror fans (or anyone frequenting the Web site) could vote on the final cover art for the highly anticipated *Night of the Creeps* DVD. The shocking aspect of this disappointing contest was its lack of decent options to choose from, with not a single piece of pre-existing poster art utilized. In the past, nearly every single home video department in Hollywood has been guilty of releasing horrible DVD covers for great vintage horror films. *Happy Birthday to Me*, *Last House on the Left*, *The Monster Squad*, *The Burning*, and *Pumpkinhead* are just a few examples. Whether it be misleading and horrible photoshopped artwork (*Happy Birthday to Me* looked like *Came meets Psycho* minus the iconic shish kabob art), or just misuse of established artwork (*The Monster Squad* and *The Burning* had 20 years to cement their major sell art to the industry which was ignored in place of lackluster and confusing art). Sure, sometimes the DVD art improves a lackluster one-sheet (ex: *Night of the Creeps*), but in the end, it is just confusing why a 20-year-old film is released (whose majority audience is made up of customers who are already fans of the title) without its iconic sell art (look for an article on this mess in a future issue of *HorrorHound*). But what was really confusing is how not one, but all three of the online options for *Night of the Creeps* were shitty at best. Especially considering there are three major pieces of sell art from the film's



history that most horror fans recognize instantly.

Shown at left are the three votable options (of which the yellow box set won). Sony released one of these as a special Comic-Con exclusive DVD cover which was given away at the event (the blue box). It wouldn't be *HorrorHound* if we didn't feel the need to show the studio what fans would most likely have wanted (and deserved) to have as a votable option for such a long-anticipated film. Above is our custom-made DVD art interpretation of what the editorial staff would have enjoyed seeing - at least it used pre-existing art! *\*Note:* This is not a condemning article against Sony, who definitely scores points for delivering a Director's Cut of this cult classic, which also boasts some exciting bonus features (a Best DVD of 2009 contender). We only felt compelled to voice the opinions of the staff and the hordes of fans who have already vocalized their discontent on the subject.

## 10 RANDOM QUESTIONS WITH Mike Dougherty

by Kenny Nelson

Every issue of *HorrorHound* we track down a director in hopes of asking them a series of 10 seemingly random (and most times stupid) questions. This issue we had the opportunity to speak with the director of the long-anticipated (and now direct-to-DVD) feature film *Trick 'r Treat*. The screenwriter of *X2*, *X-Men 2*, *Urban Legend*, *Bloody Mary* and *Superman Returns* - Mike Dougherty! Here is the result... 10 Random Questions:

**HorrorHound:** What is your favorite non-franchise slasher film?

**Mike Dougherty:** Huh... does *Perfume* count as slasher? It's a hard question because it feels like everything is being franchised or remade, and to me a remake counts as a beginning of a franchise. How about *High Tension*?

**HH:** If you could write for any director someday, who would it be?

**MD:** Tim Burton

**HH:** What is your favorite Halloween memory from when you were a kid?

**MD:** Carving my first jack-o'-lantern with my dad.

**HH:** What movie are you most embarrassed to admit you've never seen?

**MD:** *Lawrence of Arabia*.

**HH:** Do you think digital downloading of films will ever replace DVD or Blu-ray?

**MD:** Definitely, and I'm fully on board and supportive of that. I think it'll happen within the next five to 10 years.

**HH:** What's the strangest fan encounter you've had to date?

**MD:** Probably a guy who made a life-sized Sam and brought it to one of the screenings.

**HH:** Did you hold onto any keepees from filming *Trick 'r Treat*?

**MD:** Well, we're not supposed to talk about that...

**HH:** What's your favorite movie poster of all time?

**MD:** Probably the one that is hanging up in my living room which is *Alien*.

**HH:** So are you a collector yourself?

**MD:** Oh yeah. I prefer signed movie posters. I'd rather have that hanging up than just a framed movie poster.

**HH:** What's your favorite collectible that you own?

**MD:** As a starter gift from my agent, I got a Halloween poster inscribed by Carpenter saying good luck.

Be sure to check out *Trick 'r Treat* at one of the limited film festival stops over the course of this fall, and be sure to pick up this already-cut classic and soon-to-be real classic on DVD this October! You can learn more about Mike's upcoming projects and how you can purchase your own *Trick 'r Treat* memorabilia by visiting his official Web site: [www.mikedougherty.com](http://www.mikedougherty.com)!



## CHOICE CUTS:



Fans of *Clive Barker's Book of Blood* have been treated to some exciting films as of late, including *Book of Blood* "Stone" hits DVD and Blu-ray on September 22nd and includes a making-of featurette. Based on the sparse writings of Barker, book follows a young man whose body spells the messages of the dead!

The highly reviewed UK feature film, *The Children*, is poised to hit DVD on October 6th. About a family who are attacked by their own offspring, this killer hit feature is already available in the UK in special edition format (including making-ofs and deleted scenes). The US release will have bonus

The seventh and eighth installments in *Polanski's Friday the 13th* Deluxe Edition releases have been revealed. In stores September 19th, look for such bonus material as commentaries, deleted scenes, featurettes, interviews, pop route and trailers to be released throughout!

Available on October 6th comes the "Monstrous Special Edition" of *The Gate*. The long out-of-print title is being reissued thanks to Lionsgate and will come packed with new special features, including a director commentary, interviews with the cast and crew, still gallery and original trailer!

Similar to *Night of the Creeper* (page 16), *Happy Birthday to Me* was issued onto DVD a few years ago without its iconic poster art. As seen above, Anchor Bay is being this time, with a new edition of the film on DVD. More complete than ever before, the film includes music originally missing from the pre-released disc.



Slavko Horvath's *#1* we have periodically reported on the progress of Rob Zombie's long-in-production animated feature, *The Hallowed World of El Superbeasto*. A Mexican wrestler shows Dan's friends and Halloween-killer for this DVD title to street on September 28th on both DVD and BD!

Mid Creek Entertainment has an interesting if not set in stone as of August 26th: *The Gore House Greats* Collection, including as such *Mex in Blood*, *Dracula's Castle*, *Brain Terrors*, *The Devil's Hand*, *The Seven Mile's Broom*, *Highway in Hell*, *Phone Evil*, *Satan's Slave*, *Shank's*, *Terrified* and *Torment*

Seventeen is delivering one of the most anticipated films of the season with the stunning two-disc special edition of *Richard Stanley's Hardware* - in stores September 29th! This uncut/unrated disc includes a commentary (Stanley), short film, making-of, and a special 30-minute version of *Hardware*!

*The Hills Have Red* on September 28th! Starring Ted Nugent and William Sadler, the Warner Bros. DVD feature will include such extra material as an audio commentary with the film's director (Dave Parker), writer (David Schrier) and producer (Robert Barrett), and a making-of featurette.

Released to DVD and Blu-ray on August 18th, Universal's remake of *The Last House on the Left* includes both the theatrical and unrated cuts of the film (a difference of four minutes), and includes deleted scenes, a making-of featurette and trailer. The BD includes a digital copy of the film as well.



While it's not as popular as *Robotix*, the Red-Headed Rumbler, the *Barbarian* does classic slap-styled short, *Mad Monster Party* is being re-released again (thanks to Lionsgate) on DVD this September 8th. The special edition disc includes a brand-new retrospective featurette and two fun sing-a-longs.

In a surprise move, Universal Home Ent. announced that past month that *Phantasm II* (the only installment in the series yet to see release) will hit DVD on September 15th! Sadly, while we finally receive the film on home video, it comes in a barebones release (with only the *Darker* included).

October 6th sees the release of a new slew of *Ghost House Underground* DVD titles, including the previously mentioned *The Children*, as well as *Jack Richton's Offspring*, *The Thine* (not shown), and *Seventh Moon*. Starring Amy Smart, *Seventh Moon* is directed by Eduardo Sanchez (*Dark Night*).

This fall is proving to be a real gift for horror fans, as not one, but four of our most wanted DVDs (page 12) are receiving first-time-over releases, including our top three choices: *Night of the Creeps*, *Phantom II* and *The Stepfather* (above, available on Oct 13th). Also look for September 21

Universal Home Video has revealed plans for their *Wolf Man*. Universal Legacy Series. Available to own on August 30th, extras for this SE will include a commentary with Film Historian Tom Weaver, five separate featurettes revolving around the series, a Universal Horror documentary, and trailers.

## TV ON DVD

After last year's TV history series, we thought it would be fun to point out a few new key moments in the country around the world of television. Look for more interesting made-for-TV series this fall!



The series is available on DVD on Sept 15th. Includes 5 new bonus updates!



The third and final volume of *Friday the 13th: The Video* hits DVD on Sept. 22nd.



Released on DVD on Sept. 22nd, *Tales from the Darkside* series 2. Includes 24 episodes and a George Romero featurette.



*Monster Force* returns to its series on Sept 19th! Sadly, the set includes only seven updates!

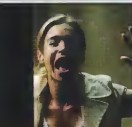
Also on DVD: Sam Raimi's exciting original feature film, *Drag Me to Hell*, was announced for DVD release on October 20th. No bonus features were revealed as of yet.

# DISSECT



Saw was originally an independent film written and directed by James Wan and Leigh Whannell. After being picked up in a bidding war by Lions Gate Films, *Saw* was released in 2004 to amazing success. The little film, starring such names as Cary Elwes, Danny Glover, Ours Major, Michael Emerson and Monica Potter, ended up grossing \$55.2 million in the US alone (a profit of \$54 million) and evolved into one of the first legitimate horror franchises since *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. After *Saw II* was released the following year to an even more impressive \$87 million take, the title officially became one of the most successful horror series of all time. *Saw II* (\$80mm), *Saw IV* (\$63.3mm) and *Saw V* (\$56.7mm) were released each subsequent Halloween, and while the box office return took a slight downturn, the franchise still delivered guaranteed business each haunting season. The impressive aspect of the series, however, doesn't come from its financial return, but from its amazing ability to stick to a continuity and collection of characters from film to film, unseen in any horror franchise prior. Actors/characters in the first film have roles that play out throughout the series, with secrets constantly revealed and twists around every corner.

In fact, it is this continuity that has become the anchor of the series. We are introduced to Jigsaw (Tobin Bell) in the first film, along with one of his victims, Amanda (Shawnee Smith). Jigsaw is a serial killer who traps his victims and



A civil engineer, Jigsaw (revealed as Jonathan Kramer) was a happily married man, with a child on the way. His wife, Jill (Betsy Russell), spent her time helping drug addicts. Attacked one evening by one of her patients, Jill suffered a miscarriage, thus beginning the downward spiral between her and her husband, who blamed his unborn son's death on the victim of the city. After learning he had inoperable cancer, and a botched suicide attempt, John soon plotted a way to show the victim of the world the true value of life.



As Jigsaw furthered his work, he became a recluse, creating more elaborate traps and situations for the many lost souls, such as Amanda - a drugged out mess of a woman with nothing to live for. Much like many of Jigsaw's traps, Amanda was placed into a contraption that would rip her head open (like a pez dispenser), unless she removed a key from a seemingly dead body on the ground. After her escape, she proclaimed Jigsaw had saved her - and her appreciation for life was renewed. Others weren't so lucky.



While the police are working on the Jigsaw case, not everyone views his work as a negative. A Detective Hoffman decides to dispose of his sister's killer in Jigsaw fashion as part of a copycat killing. While his work is not on par with the real deal, Jigsaw takes notice and blackmails the confused officer, helping him find his path toward becoming a partner in crime. Unknown to the cops, two "killers" are now at work, setting up elaborate traps - including one in which a man must crawl through barbed wire to save his own life!



Possibly the most twisted trap is from "the bathroom scene," in which photographer Adam (Leigh Whannell) and Dr. Lawrence Gordon (Cary Elwes) are chained to the mysterious room's walls. The only way out to saw through their arête with a hacksaw! The true identity of Jigsaw is not revealed until the finale of the film, as Dr. Gordon's wife and daughter are kidnapped by a supposed Jigsaw assistant, Zep Hinde (Michael Emerson). In the end, everyone is a victim of Jigsaw as nobody escapes in a shocking twist ending.



One of Jigsaw's first traps featured a chair in which a victim is confined and must push his head past a series of knives to touch a button with his face. The victim of this trap was the same man who caused John's wife's miscarriage. The trap worked, however, the man didn't survive after passing the "test," and Jigsaw was born.



After a number of murders, a special team of detectives were assigned to the Jigsaw case (the name was given by the media after leaked information revealed that the killer removed a slice of skin in the shape of a jigsaw puzzle piece from all of his deceased "victims"). One such detective was David Tapp (Danny Glover).



Throughout the film series, it is exposed that Jigsaw had assistance in most of the on-screen exploits, including the bathroom trap seen in the original film. Seemingly unknown to Amanda (who also came on board to help in Jigsaw's plans), Hoffman waited in the shadows to oversee all the games and ensure Jigsaw's safety.



Jigsaw laid on the floor mere feet away from Dr. Gordon and Adam while cluse throughout the film revealed Adam was hired to spy on the doctor, who in turn was the one responsible for informing Jigsaw that he had cancer and was months away from an untimely death. Zep was a lowly orderly in this entangled web called Saw.

# NG S ALL

A Timeline of the Events and Major Players from the Saw Franchise  
by Nathan Rahneman

places them in contraptions and scenarios that result in them either taking someone else's life, or mutilating themselves, all in hopes of saving their own lives. Jigsaw is shown as a dying cancer patient who is scheming his grand finale, and over the films, Amanda and others introduced throughout the series make continual appearances, as either accomplices or eventual victims (or both). By *Saw IV*, Jigsaw is dead, but his "end game" has not yet been fully realized. After his passing, the story's tone changed, as did its focus, which shifted to other characters such as Agent Strahm.

The amusing aspect of Jigsaw's crimes comes from the idea that he "never kills his victims." With a cross-hatch of accomplices over the films, it is hard to determine at what point Jigsaw truly is a murderer (or not). His cohort Amanda, who was subjected to a trap in which she had to kill an unwilling victim to extract a key, was no doubt a killer (even in the act of saving her own life). Throughout *Saw III*, you see Amanda's series of misadventures in which she obviously murdered her victims. In *Saw V*, Agent Strahm was convicted to death without chance of survival (if not for his clever and quick usage of a pen),

proving that Jigsaw's accomplice, Hoffman, was in fact a murderer (not counting his first copycat kill). But throughout the films, we are witness to a series of traps that could only result in death, ending speculation that Jigsaw could ever be considered anything but a killer - even if the personally didn't agree with such an accusation. This may be reason why, after five films, the impact of *Saw* has begun to wear out - the viewers themselves are no longer skeptics, they are convinced. And with Jigsaw dead now for three years (and three films), learning more and more about his history has become less of a point of interest.

But we at *HorrorHound* wanted to take this opportunity to refresh viewers' minds in regard to the world of *Saw*. It may be a tradition now (if only for financial reasons), but it still has one major thing going for it - beloved continuity. With continuity comes dissemination, however, as most fans have no strength for recapping five previous film's worth of history before hitting the local cineplex come Halloween weekend. Over these two pages is a brief dissection of the five *Saw* films - in our attempt to piece the puzzle together before Jigsaw's exploits invade cinema again on October 23rd in *Saw VI*.



Having disposed of his supposed captives (Detective Tapp met his demise while hot on the heels of Jigsaw), and with two assistants aiding in his traps, Jigsaw began setting up his ultimate plan - which would continue beyond his own imminent death. Detective Eric Matthews (Donnie Wahlberg), who was responsible for Amanda's incarceration prior to her meeting Jigsaw, was targeted in a new and even more elaborate trap that included his own son; locked in a house with various criminals the detective personally put away!



As Jigsaw's body count continues, the traps are getting sloppier. It becomes very apparent to the police that Jigsaw may have a copycat killer whose traps are inescapable. As the search for Detective Matthews continues, more members of the task force are held captive and killed by Amanda, who is enforcing her own brand of justice in Jigsaw's name. A new trap begins as a doctor is kidnapped to help Jigsaw live long enough to witness his "end game" while said doctor's husband is stuck in a trap of his own.



Of the surviving police force dedicated to his case, mainly Mark Hoffman (Costas Mandylor) and Agent Peter Strahm (Scott Patterson), and trying to track down the still-missing Detective Matthews, they soon expose a series of traps that had apparently been set up prior to Jigsaw's demise. We soon discover that Hoffman has been working with Jigsaw the entire time and was working parallel with the police to ensure the games continued without interruption from the law. By the end, all investigating detectives are killed off, one by one.

With an autopsy performed on the body of Jigsaw, a tape is discovered revealing a final game for his assistant, Hoffman, who must now work against Agent Strahm (who is closing in on the new Jigsaw), to continue the work of his mentor. Hoffman's last solo trap includes a series of rooms (with an unwitting group of low lifes) where teamwork is needed to survive. As Strahm closes in on Hoffman, the trap proves a success as two "victims" survive and learn the value of life, while Strahm goes down the wrong path and meets his demise.



While Amanda was included in the house trap, Detective Matthews captures Jigsaw, but falls in his own "game" which results in his own capture (and Jigsaw's escape) plus the revelation that Amanda had been helping set him up this whole time. Now with Eric Matthews missing, the search for the dying Jigsaw heats up!



No one seems to pass their test. Jigsaw tells Amanda that she is not strong enough to take over his cause, and every one is seemingly killed, including Jigsaw, who is said to death by Jeff (Argus Macfadyen), who failed his own test, losing his wife (Dr. Lynn, Bahar Soomekhi, mentioned above) in the process.



While the remains of Jigsaw are discovered by Mark Hoffman, who claims to be the final survivor of Jigsaw's game, the police discover the body of Agent Strahm, who somehow survived a water trap thanks to use of a mock endothermic tube he puts in his own neck. His survival is the last kink in Hoffman's plans.



The only lasting question revolving around the film series is what Jill's (Jigsaw's wife) involvement is with his legacy. With only hints at her inclusion in the "games," this will be the last lingering question revolving around the series. Was she always a part of the plan, or is she the next unwitting victim?

**Fun Fact:** Jigsaw uses a puppet (named Billy) to serve as a "host" to his victims as they are introduced to his games and their rules. Billy is based on a puppet Jigsaw designed for his unborn son.

# DISSECTING SAW ON DVD

From the Collection of Miguel Xavier Fernandez

Over the past five years, *Saw* has become one of the largest horror franchises of all time. Looking at the home video releases of these films, you can get an idea of just how penetrating these movies have been. Here is a guide to all known available US DVD, Blu-ray and UMD releases of the *Saw* saga. Hunt them down at your own peril!



Saw General Release



Best Buy Exclusive



Rental Store Full Screen



Rental Store Widescreen



Uncut Edition 2-Disc



Exclusive Blood Pack



Best Buy Extra w/Booklet



Two-Pack w/Booklet



Wal-Mart Exclusive



Target Extra! Three-Pack



134 Preview DVD



Saw 1 Full Screen



Saw 1 Widescreen



FutuShop Extra w/CD



Best Buy Extra w/Comic



Rental Store Widescreen



Uncut Edition 3-D Cover



Screener DVD



FutuShop Two-Pack



Saw II Full Screen



Best Buy Extra w/CD



Circuit City Extra w/DVD



Rental Store Widescreen



Target 2-Disc Extra!



FutuShop Extra Cover



Director's Cut



Circuit City Extra w/CD



Rental Store Widescreen



Target Extra! w/Booklet



Wal-Mart Extra! with Music CD Combo Pack



Saw V Full Screen



Circuit City First w/Key



Spinning Blade CE



Rental Store Full Screen



Wal-Mart Trilogy



Pop!-Headed Blue Set



Hot Topic Extra! Set with Mini Figure



Assorted DVD's and Exclusives



Saw Blu-ray



Saw II Blu-ray



Saw III Blu-ray



Limited Helix Cover



Saw IV Blu-ray



Saw V Blu-ray



Saw I and II UMD (PSP) Discs



# TOXIC AVENGER: THE MUSICAL

BY NATHAN HANNEMAN

PLAYBILL  
NEW WORLD STAGES



When one thinks of *The Toxic Avenger*, a slew of images come to mind: gross-out low budget horror infused with a cult classic smell stomped from the "video invasion" of the 1980s and the dirty urban landscapes that were so prevalent throughout that era of cinema. Troma was the king of their kind, and while they still churn out the occasional entertaining title - nothing can touch the original *Toxic Avenger*. With three sequels in the books, Troma (to this day) is still remembered mostly for this green-skinned mutant icon... even after 25 years.

With his sequels, a cartoon series, toys from a multitude of companies, and various comic book and video

game interpretations, it should have been no surprise earlier this year when the *Toxic Avenger* premiered with his very own off-Broadway musical! Based on characters from the original film, this new musical follows the adventures of Melvin Ferd the Third, who is hard at work trying to rid Tromaville (Exit 138 on the New Jersey Turnpike) of its high-toxicity, which has hit an all-time high, thanks to illegal substance dumping from the head of the "Good Earth Company" and Tromaville Mayor Babs Belgoody. After snoping too close to the cause of Jersey's pollution problems, Melvin is disposed of by a couple of local cronies, after being shoved into a can of the very waste he is trying to rid his city of. However, the waste doesn't kill young Melvin - instead he is mutated into the eye-drooping, super strong (and super smelly) Toxic Avenger! With only his one true love, Sarah (a blind librarian who is unaware that Toxic is the former nerdy Melvin), and help from his mother (Ma Ferd), Toxic must battle the criminal underbelly of Tromaville, and stop the Mayor's evil plans before their beloved city is ruined forever.

The *Toxic Avenger* did undergo some obvious story changes. Toxic has turned in his butt and mop for a more leveled love story and focus on the good vs. evil battle of Mayor Belgoody. But gore itself is not completely ignored, however, as staged carnage is on display as Toxic literally tears apart bad guys, limb from limb - even making a "slam dunk" into a waste barrel with some poor schlub's severed head!

As for the music, we are dealing with a soundtrack prepared by David Bryan (Bon Jovi keyboardist) and off-Broadway veteran Joe DiPietro. The over-the-stage band of four has a very modern rock styling with well thought out numbers that help move the story forward, without dragging down the performance with silly non-important filler (the show is a swift 60 minutes long and contains no breaks).

The play has grown over the past few months into quite the underground hit. Reviews for the play have been glowing, with the *New York*

*Post* calling it "hilariously funny" and *Time Out Magazine* declaring it "Four Stars! A rock and roll romp!" The musical even obtained three Drama Desk and two Outer Critics Circle nominations - winning both the 2009 award for Best Off-Broadway musical by the Outer Critics Circle and Best Off-Broadway Musical by the 2009 Theater Fanc's Choice Awards!



The show, which is currently playing at New World Stages, just two blocks from Times Square (and shouting distance from the bigger budgeted Broadway features such as *Wicked* and *Q to 9*), New World is a small "inner city" style theatre housing a number of productions, with *Toxic* the obvious highlight of the bunch. Seating is much more limited than even a Showcase-style chain movie theater for first run blockbusters, but the compact area makes for a much more personable experience that any HorrorHound (or TromaHound) shouldn't miss. It wouldn't be HorrorHound if we didn't also mention the merchandise! The show's original cast recording sound track (shown below), as well as a number of t-shirts, keychains, a mug, and poster can be found on the musical's Web site: [www.thetoxicavenger-musical.com](http://www.thetoxicavenger-musical.com).

As a writer who loves frequenting New York's musical offerings (I have witnessed no less than 20 Broadway productions over the past 10 years), I can easily say that *Toxic Avenger* leaves a lasting impression on the viewer. The more personable feel the smaller New World Stages theatre delivers somehow enhances the experience, and while the cast is small (only five members (see pic) take the stage at any given time), they are utilized wonderfully and hilariously at times (the gem of the show, Nancy Opel, plays both Toxic's mom and Mayor Belgoody - with one major musical number encompassing both characters as they cat-fight at a local hair salon, with laugh-out-loud results). The essence of Toxic is captured, but proves that low budget can often deliver high entertainment. With the musical playing throughout the rest of 2009 and into 2010, make sure you head to New York and book your seats today! 🍷





# VIDEO REMEMBERING CHAPTER



# INVASION THE VHS BOOM EIGHT

BY MATT MOORE

Out of all the distributors of the 1980s, studios either propelled into tandem by consistently extreme covers and titles, or by delivering only a random library of noteworthy films—enough to keep us HorrorHounds fawning at the mouths. Unicorn Video was a company that surely delivered the former. Unicorn was not known for having the largest catalog; however, their releases did include an eclectic breed, filled with not just the typical, drab films that were hitting the VHS circuit at that time, but the offbeat titles of the slasher sub-genre, as well as witchcraft, the undead, Blaxploitation and Kung Fu. Unicorn was able to hold its own amongst competition in the swelling VHS aisles of the '80s, and gave us some terrific memories in the process.

## History

Unicorn Video came onto the scene around 1982. They entered into the ever-expanding home entertainment market initially with foreign films and obscure titles, which were less pricey and helped Unicorn ease the initial cost of distributing these soon-to-be iconic titles. Unicorn solely released foreign films to start out, and slowly worked their way into the underground American horror scene. Video store owners began to look toward Unicorn when purchasing titles for their customers who demanded something a little more unusual, even bizarre, from home or abroad.

Unicorn was one of the first, if not the first, company to unleash Paul Naschy onto the American rental market. With films like *The Fury of the Wolfman*, *The Mummy's Revenge* and *Night of the Sorcerers*, the Spanish horror legend was introduced to the US audience in style. Outside of the Naschy titles, Unicorn mostly dwelled in the witchcraft end of the genre. Even though some video distributors would not jump into the "Tie," fearing the taboo surrounding it, Unicorn didn't seem to mind much at all. The company released such films as *Warlock Moon*, *Jess Franco's The Demons*, and the classic *Simon, King of Witches* (with '70s grindhouse icon Andrew Pine), which were a few of the key releases under the Unicorn banner (before succumbing to a very golden retirement).

As these soon-to-be-classics were introduced into the already saturated marketplace of the time, promotion was vital in ensuring consumer attention, and

Unicorn proved its willingness to bid for the customer's dollar by delivering some great box artwork. Unicorn took the liberty of creating new artwork with most releases to better market the film, and sometimes they were actually successful at producing artwork superior to the original one-sheet or foreign poster presentations. This helped to make films like *A Bell from Hell* and *Demon Lover's* real estate more eye catching than its surrounding titles on rental shelves. An important detail some collectors might miss is Unicorn's usage of alternate artwork for the same title. Unicorn was one of the many labels that started releasing films with a clamshell case before reverting to a less expensive slipcase. With many of the releases doing well in the rental market, Unicorn issued a re-release if the demand was high enough, putting out a new slipcase version of the film. For all of the new Unicorn slipcases, they produced new vivid art for the film. In the case of *Keep My Grave Open*, the artwork on the slipcase far surpasses the clamshell's art with its bright hues and menacing image, catching the eye on several levels which helped to engage interest. The clamshell, on the other hand, is kind of bland and does not do a whole lot. But with any good, comes the bad...the clamshell case art for *Girls on the Road* paints a horrific image of what's going to happen to those lovely ladies in the convertible; however, the slipcase leaves you with low expectations, like "Wow, another hitchhiker/slasher film?" But in all fairness, they can't all be home runs.

Unicorn didn't only deliver an excellent catalog of horror titles, but they had a very large selection of Blaxploitation films (including a number of Fred Williamson titles), as well as a surge of martial arts films from the '70s (featuring the likes of Bruce Lee). Alongside those features were more commercial films, including a few action flicks and even a cartoon or two. One title Unicorn released that happens to be a very overlooked Charles Bronson action/thriller flick is *Someone Behind the Door*...I'm a sucker for anything Charles Bronson did, and this movie is by far one of his most underrated releases...as well as Unicorn's, even

though its distribution numbers were high (probably one of the highest on the accompanied list, alongside a number of Jim Kelly martial art films).

In most of our past Video Invasion articles, we have seen the giants rise and







fall - normally due to internal corporate complications. Unicom on the other hand, never felt. As a matter of fact, they are still releasing titles to this day. None of which are the caliber of what we saw in the early parts of the company's career, but they did move into other spectrums of martial arts films and Z-grade action movies (after all of the martial arts titles

clashed case with embedded art, two - a clamshell case with art insert, and three - a slipcase. Although some of the releases that had artwork embedded within the clamshell (such as Grave of the Vampire, Werewolves on Wheels or Savage Intruder) also saw a slipcased release, titles such as Keep My Grave Open, The Demon Lover and Girls on the Road underwent all three phases of release.



Unicom released back in the day, it must have hit a nerve somewhere). But even though Unicom isn't as relevant today as they were in the '80s, they still kick out some entertaining films from time to time.

#### Collectability

As we have seen in recent years, the VHS tape has gone from "give away at a yard sale" status to an iconic piece of pop culture memorabilia. Some are still considered thrift store scraps, but a select number of companies have gone into the collectible archives as bonafide gold. Unicom, for some reason, is one of those shiny bricks in the vault. Most all Unicom Video releases, on some level, are collectable. Some titles, such as Warlock Moon, rarely drop below the \$200 mark, which is odd because the firm's distribution was the same as the others in the catalog and its production count was well in the thousands. But demand, as well as rarity, drive price, so I guess this one is holding tight thanks to the demand end of that graph. But with most of the other titles, \$50 seems to be the cap. Every so often you can grab a good copy of Grave of the Vampire or Seeds of Evil for \$20, but with eBay, it is kind of hard to determine an item's true value. One day it's a dollar - the next day it's \$350. As with anything, if you want it that bad ... go for it.

With most of the Unicom titles there were three phases of release: one - a

clamshell case with embedded art, two - a clamshell case with art insert, and three - a slipcase. Although some of the releases that had artwork embedded within the clamshell (such as Grave of the Vampire, Werewolves on Wheels or Savage Intruder) also saw a slipcased release, titles such as Keep My Grave Open, The Demon Lover and Girls on the Road underwent all three phases of release. These phases exhibit the evolution of the company, starting with the embedded clamshell and ending with the slipcase staple of the late '80s, until the VHS Boom's demise. Collecting all three sometimes feels like searching for a needle in a haystack, but a little time and patience can result in their acquisition.

Outside of the three above mentioned formats, the ever popular Big Box was not a common staple for Unicom; however, it was attempted once with the Charles Bronson film Someone's Behind the Door. With the colorful artwork, the Big Box would have made for a very nice platform for Unicom, but I guess the clamshell worked a little better for them.

One variant from Unicom that has turned the heads of more than a few collectors is the Spanish releases. Titles such as The Witches' Mountain and Night of the Sorcerers had Spanish language distribution, which tend to fetch a much higher price on the secondary market due to their rarity. In the US, it was unusual for video stores to get multi-language movies, unless it was the only way to carry the flick. So if an English version was available, most English-speaking store owners picked the obvious choice. Unicom didn't issue a large number of these foreign films, and eventually phased out the idea due to lack of interest. But for us collectors, it gives us a whole new level to the hunt.



[illegible]

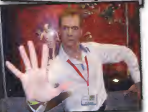
Thanks to Louis Justin, Mark Crowder, Patrick, and Kevin and Phil of K&O Video

28. *Specter of Edgar Allan Poe, The*  
29. *Warlock Moon*  
30. *Werewolves on Wheels*  
31. *Witch Who Came from the Sea, The*  
32. *Witches' Mountain, The*



# SAN DIEGO COMIC-CON

Even with the economy in the dumps, nothing could stop the 140,000 plus comic, video game, action figure and movie fans from ascending to the San Diego Comic-Con this past July! In another sold-out show, studios unveiled product, posters, trailers, panels and even films in this five-day orgy of full-capacity nerdery! To HorrorHound's surprise Warner Bros. presented some impressive promotion for *Trick 'r Treat*, the long delayed and highly anticipated horror anthology starring Brian Cox and Anna Paquin. Special printed bags featuring Sam, the lovable iconic character from the film, littered the convention floor throughout the weekend. On Thursday evening, WB even hosted a special cocktail event for the press showing their eventual acceptance of the film, before ushering a late night panel and screening, which was packed with nearly 1,000 fans who howled and cheered throughout the impressive screening! On top of this, a suitable amount of PR was thrown about for *Halloween 2*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (in which the trailer premiered during a panel, and HH staffer Sean Clark got new Krueger star, Jackie Earle Haley, to sign the Freddy Nikas he was sporting during the event). All day Thursday, at the Sony booth, fans could get their faces all zombified for a special zombie walk held later that evening! A special Night of the Creeps signing also occurred with director Fred Dekker, as well as a Fear Clinic signing for FearNet's new show starring Danielle Harris, Robert Englund and Kane Hodder! Cable shows *Dexter* and *True Blood*'s presence was highly apparent, with panels, banners, promos, etc. ... and nobody could escape Twilight madness on Thursday as thousands of attendees packed the famous "Hall H" for a glimpse at the latest installment and whatever actors may have shown up. Most of the smarter fans tried to stay away from anything revolving around Hall H (which sadly had a lot of fun programming planned that same day). While horror had a much larger stake in this year's event, the effects of the economy were more apparent in terms of merchandise and memorabilia. Seen on the opposite page is just a sample of the more simplistic promos obtained at the show. Over the next two pages you can see the latest toy and collector announcements, which were relegated to just a couple noteworthy items per toy company (including Mattel's *Ghostbusters*, NECA's *Cult Classics*, Mezco's *Halloween 2* and Entertainment Earth's *Twilight Zone* and *Dexter* product). After such an exciting show, the countdown begins yet again for 2010's big event, which we are sure will be just as big, and just as expensive as this year's proved! Enjoy! 🍷



The HorrorHound staff was rocking out at Comic-Con this year (shown above), hanging out with such killer company as Danny Devito (promoting his new venture, *Blood Factory*), Eli Roth (inglorious Bastards), Chan-wook Park (*Oldboy*), Thibault (*Trick 'r Treat*), Michael Dougherty (*Trick 'r Treat* director), Brian Cox (*Trick 'r Treat*, *Mannix*) and Robert Englund (promoting *Fear Clinic* for FearNet)

**Did You Know?** This was the 40th anniversary of the famous Comic-Con International. Their first event, held at a hotel, hosted less than 500 fans while this year's event surpassed 140,000!

# TOY NEWS

## COMIC-CON COLLECTOR NEWS

At night, Sideshow Collectibles unveiled very few new horror-themed offerings. A killer Freddy Krueger statue was the only highlight from their display.

Below, Mattel revealed their entire four-figure assortment of both 7" and 12" Ghostbuster lines, with the surprise addition of Walter Peck (who is set to come with a recreation of the Containment Unit). Comic-Con attendees had the opportunity to pick up the first figure from the line, a "slimed" Egon with Slimier 7" figure (which was also available for a limited time on [MatyCollector.com](http://MatyCollector.com)). With the 25th anniversary of Ghostbusters, it is apparent that the "boys are back in town" as evident by the plethora of merchandise from Mattel and others (Hallmark product, also below).



Famous Monsters of Filmland were in attendance revealing several pieces of self-produced merchandise, including a limited coin for Nosferatu and Bela Lugosi as Dracula poster (by Robert Aragon), both of which were available for sale at the show. Famous Monsters also unveiled plans for a second coin and a 7" scale Max Schreck Nosferatu figure. More details will be available next issue!



## BIG BANG POW

Dexter is definitely one of Big Bang Pow's go-to licenses. They had a limited supply of "Dark Avenger" Dexter figures available at the show and premiered this exciting two-pack featuring Dex in his "kill" attire and Sgt. Doakes! Also on hand were new bobble heads based on characters from the Twilight Zone TV series and the premiere of a new talking statue based on creator Rod Serling!





Above: *Deadworld's* Zombie King, as part of a new comic book themed toy line from Shocker Toys!  
 Right: *Where the Wild Things Are* figures (based on the film) by Japanese company, Medicom.

Above: Mazco had a minimal amount of horror goodies on display, including action figures based on the ever-delayed *Wolf Man* (including 7" and 12" scale versions, bloody and non-bloody), as well as two versions of Rob Zombie's H2 Michael Myers figure (regular and "hobo" Myers). Mez-Its based on these characters were also on display (see next issue), as well as several series of *Living Dead Dolls*, including a show exclusive "re-imagining" set.



Above: Monogram International while experiencing some delays on their New Line horror products, did offer an exclusive gold keychain dog tag set of Freddie Krueger and Jason Voorhees, as well as the already-available vinyl keychains (above left). Banks based on these characters are also due soon!

Dark Horse may have won the prize for most interesting new announcements at Comic-Con, with a statue based on Frank Frazetta's *Dracula Meets the Wolfman*. A price and release date is still unknown. William Stout's *Dirty Dozen* collection was also revealed to include mini-busts based on Stout's zombie designs from the film *Return of the Living Dead*. Shown at left is Stout with his creations: the Half Corpse and Tarrman Zombie. No release date or price point were revealed for this series either.

Dark Horse Deluxe also showcased a series of figures based on the seven deadly sins (four of which are shown at right) designed by Spawn cover artist Carlos Pacheco. This line will retail for around \$24.99 and harkens back to McFarlane's days of in-house horror oddities!





An early concept shot of Dr. Decker

# NIGHTBREED

## PARTHING THE MONSTERS

By Jessica Dwyer

Monsters. Rarely does the word make you think of beauty or grace. When people talk of monsters it's typically with derision or hatred, or they use the term to describe something hideous and evil. But to some, monsters are far more than that. They represent a part of ourselves we secretly wish could be set free; they are the formation of our secret desires. They are beautiful and mythic, the stuff of legend. We envy their freedom, power and their ageless existence.

There are few creators or artists in the world that understand this duality more so than Clive Barker. Barker is one of those people who welcome the monsters and celebrate them in his work, be it painting or writing or both together. The monsters are his brethren ... outcasts who live apart from the normal everyday and back in the glory of the dark side of the natural (and unnatural) world.

Barker's work is well known now, with the success of his many books, graphic novels and paintings. His film work is also considered some of the most iconic of the modern horror library, giving birth to *Pinhead* and the *Hellraiser* franchise as well as his written works' film adaptations, such as *Midnight Meat Train* and the soon-to-be-released *Book of Blood*. Clive Barker is still considered the "Crown Prince of Horror" by many in the industry, but in his earlier days (and even now), he's had to fight battles to defend the monsters he loves so much. And sadly for the monsters (and for us) some of those battles he has lost.

One of those recent battles was the much publicized issue over the release (or lack thereof) of *Midnight Meat Train* by Lionsgate. The film skipped a full theatrical release, and was instead sent directly to second-run movie houses (and even then, it was limited). One of the best horror films of that year, *Midnight Meat Train* left the station far too early. Barker on his own Web site, as well as many other horror film sites, posted entries telling fans to send messages to Lionsgate begging them to support the film and give it a wide release.

Unfortunately the studio did not listen, so those same sites had to rely upon fans to send them lists of theaters that actually WERE showing the film to get the word out to those wishing to see the movie. Although the film was released on DVD a few months later, the treatment still stung fans of Barker and his work.

But the treatment of *Midnight Meat Train* was nothing compared to what many consider one of Clive Barker's best films (and a favorite of the writer/director himself): *Nightbreed*. The story behind the movie and the only version fans the world over have seen is more frightening than the creatures in the film. It's a tale of an artist who wanted to tell a story never really told before, a work ahead of its time and misunderstood by an industry that didn't know what to do with it ... and a ratings board predisposed to ridicule a man for who he was and what he had to say.

### In the Beginning ...

Clive Barker's novella "Cabal" was released in 1988 as a short story collection also named *Cabal*. The story was one that Barker thought would make a great film, with a deep mythology and also a message.

The story centered on Aaron Boone, a young man who is



seeing a psychiatrist for therapy. Decker, his analyst, notifies him that he's responsible for the deaths of a number of families in the town of Calgary. After a near-fatal accident, Boone decides to seek out "Midian," a place he has dreamt about where all your sins are forgiven. Midian is a place of refuge for the monsters of the world, the outcasts. Leaving his girlfriend, Lori, he goes in search of this haven.

Boone eventually finds Midian and in the process is bitten by a member of the "Nightbreed." Trying to escape, Boone is ambushed by Decker and a group of police. His doctor has betrayed him, using him to find Midian, as Decker is revealed to be Calgary Killer before tricking the police into opening fire on Boone.

But Boone, thanks to the bite he received earlier, is now more than human.

Lori is told his body has disappeared from the morgue and she goes in search of him ... as does Decker. What follows is a war between the outcasts and monsters against the humans, who it turns out, are far more monstrous than "the Breed" themselves.

Barker's story turned the concept of good and evil on its head. The most violent and evil of the characters weren't creatures of the night or the beings who lurked in the shadows because the sun burned them. The bad guys were the authority figures, the police and the doctors who told you how you should think ... at least according to them. "Cabal" was a tale that called out the hypocrisy in the world, disguised as a horror story (but a damn good one.)

Clive Barker wanted to take "Cabal" into the film world and create a new movie mythology around the story. He envisioned a trilogy he would direct and write himself. With the strength of success that *Hellraiser* had given him, as well as the popularity of his books, Barker went to Morgan Creek Productions. He made a deal with Joe Roth, the head of the company, for three pictures, one of which would be *Son of Celluloid* (a horror story about movies of a different sort.)

"I told Joe Roth, back when *Nightbreed* was still a novel," Barker says, "I explained the concept to Joe that this was a





movie about good monsters. This was a movie where the monsters were the good guys, and he just loved that. He instantly got it, and I thought, wow, this is so cool because I'm going to get to really make a socio-political point. I'm going to use monsters as a metaphor for all the outsiders in our culture. Primarily, of course, as a gay man ... that's why I feel like I belong in *Midian*. You know, I'm the one who was and has been for my life outside of my family. But we all have some sense of that other-ness, that outside-ness. I think there are a lot of us, for various reasons, who can identify with a creature who is disfigured, who is targeted, and this was my vision."

Cline continues, "We started ... I wrote the script and we got the green light. And we started to make the monsters. We were three weeks into shooting, and Joe Roth called me late at night in London, and said 'I have some bad news. I've severed my connection with Jim Robinson.' And I said, 'Who's Jim Robinson?' I've never met the man, never had any dealings with him, I didn't



know what his place was in all this. And Joe said, 'He's the money man, he's the man backing your movie. I'm going to go work for Fox. Good Luck.'

"So we'll jump forward a little bit," Barker continues, "I like Jim Robinson a lot. Jim Robinson is funny, and human, and self-deprecating, and if I had a choice to go out to dinner with somebody and the choice was Jim Robinson or the Pope, I'd pick Jim Robinson. He's got a really nice way about him. But, he didn't get the movie. He didn't understand from word one why the hell I would make a movie in which the monsters were the good guys.

"But let's just see it from his side for a moment," the author explains, "you're in a marketplace and all he's concerned with is how do I get my money back? Here's Barker pursuing a personal vision which is in contradiction that my demographics tell me about movies. He didn't understand why it would [sell]. He was not an outsider, but he was head of a mini major. He's not the kind of guy that our differences would keep us from not liking one another. I truly like him, but ...



*The rumored 2-disc special edition of Nightbreed as it was revealed online more than five years ago, which was purported to include tons of bonus features as well as a copy of Cabal. Today, this special edition set has been relegated at best to a rumor, or just a really bad joke ...*

this was a guy who the first time I met him told me, and this is Jim taking, 'I believe in the golden rule, I have the gold and I make the rules.' It all sort of went to hell from there. I truly believe it took years off my life."

"I was so committed to the vision," Barker goes on, "So much in love with the idea of doing a horror movie that flew in the face of the conventions of a horror movie. The only real villains in this are a psychologist, a priest and a policeman ... the forces of authority."

#### The Fight for Midian

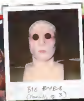
It wasn't just the studio who Barker had to deal with in terms of having his vision achieved on screen. Going back and forth with Morgan Creek in terms of cutting scenes and the film's focus, Barker also had to deal with the MPAA.

The ratings board is well known for its dislike of horror films. But back in the late '80s and early '90s, it would seem they were even harsher towards filmmakers like Barker. And it would also seem they weren't afraid to show it or tell it to the person's face.

One scene that Barker particularly loved that was cut from the final version entailed Boone walking into a bar and watching Lori singing. "I know I shot scenes I adore that got cut and tossed to the floor," Barker says, "I know I shot Anne Bobby singing 'Johnny Got Angry,' a song that K.D. Lang covered, and Boone comes to the concert and Anne Bobby has an amazing voice. She is singing this song in a large bar, the kind of place where there is drinking and a show going on at the same time. And Boone stands amongst this crowd and watches her, and the song completely ... perfectly talks about Boone, 'Johnny get angry, Johnny get mad, show me a side to you that you've never had.' And it's wonderful!" Barker exclaims, "And it's right there, and then without saying goodbye to her, he leaves and heads out the door and heads off to Midian, and it's a big moment. It's an emotional high point of the first act. Boone, because of his feelings, is unable to say goodbye."







Shown in this article are various photographs from production on *Nightbreed*.



And this is where the MPAA comes in play. "He's seen Narcisse, and he's seen him cut his own face off ... which is a lot longer and more brutal scene," explains Barker. As we all know, the hospital room scene is one of the more chopped up of the film, and the reason for it is that the scene is more disturbing than anything else shown in *Nightbreed*. "Well that's because we were cut to shit by the other power. Which is the MPAA, who then had their own words to say," Barker explains. "They HATED the movie. THEY HATED IT because I was making, in their own words, perverse and freakish characters seem heroic. There's no sanity there. At one point I spoke with Jack Valenti, who was still running the MPAA back then." He continues, "And I talked to Jack and I said 'Look, what's the issue here? None of this is realistic, it's not like any of this is going to happen to you while your at home. Kids aren't going to go home and pretend to be monsters anymore or less than they were already.' And Jack said look, 'You're a twisted man.' This is Jack Valenti talking, 'You're a twisted man. We know what that Heilbrater thing was all about, you and your ass man freaks.' And that was basically the end of the conversation." Barker adds, "That was the atmosphere that we were dealing [with]."

"We could go on and on about the idiocy of all of this," Barker says, resignedly. "The point is now ... I don't believe that this picture is ever going to reach a place of perfect ... there were scenes I never shot that I wanted to that Jim just pulled right out of the script and said that they we're not shooting this, we're not shooting this and so on. At one point ... you know making films is well, damn exhausting. And the director ... if he's the right director, he feels like he's under siege. I was under siege."

As is evident, Clive Barker took on an army of nay sayers to see his vision achieved. And while it was filmed (for the most part), it still did not get to the big screen as he had imagined it. Cut down to a shorter version and censored down to what the MPAA considered acceptable, the film was at least given a haunt-

ing and beautiful score by Danny Elfman.

When it was released Morgan Creek hardly advertised it at all. The ads that were shown, marketed the film like it was a slasher flick. Barely any of the creatures were shown on screen, and the poster that was used in theaters was nearly identical to the poster for the movie *Bad Dreams* that was released only a year or so earlier. The wide eyes of a female victim conveyed nothing of the real plot of the film or the amazing makeup and artistry that was used in creating the creatures and denizens of Midian.

Barker did release a beautiful (and now rather hard to come by) book entitled *The Nightbreed Chronicles* which showcased the amazing special effects that were created for the film. Each character was shown in a full portrait photo along with the very detailed biography that Barker had created for them. But it just goes to show how much mythology and story were left to tell in the land of the *Nightbreed* and how much we weren't allowed to see.

#### Finding Midian

Years have passed, nearly 20 of them in fact, since *Nightbreed* was released. Enter Mark Miller, a friend of Clive Barker's as well as a fan. "The fact is," Mark says, "he is one of the few people who could scare the bejesus out of me as a child. I always loved the horror movies, I was always looking to be scared, but I never really was. And then, and I actually got the chance to tell him this. I went and saw *Love of Illusions* in the theater and I had to walk out. I just was not ready for it. I think I was only 12 at the time. After I told him that, he made fun of me, which

was pretty funny."

After talking with Clive about *Nightbreed* and realizing how much the film meant to him, Mark decided to go on a mission of sorts. He was inspired to find the lost footage and to bring the monsters out into the open. He wanted to see the director's cut Clive had envisioned and he wanted everyone else to see it as



# CLIVE BARKER'S NIGHTBREED



well. "There's definitely the fact that it's one of Clive's favorites," Mark explains, "There's the fact that all this stuff has never seen the light of day. There's all this speculation, all the posts on IMDB and all over the place saying 'I just heard that the director's cut has just been announced,' and it's just people making stuff up. So I just asked him one day, I didn't even know there had been such a botched job done on the film. After sort of hanging out with him some more and finding things out, I just asked him, what if I tried finding it? I just knew

that no one has really done that." So Mark set out, in a way, to find Midian.

"I started with the only thing he had, which was Mark Goldblatt (who edited the film)." Mark starts, "He was the guy that Morgan Creek brought in to make their changes, and I knew a lot of people blame him for it, but he was just doing his job. He couldn't be a nicer guy. So I got a meeting with him at Clive's house and we chatted for about two hours and I asked him ... cause I have no idea how to go about finding a director's cut and getting all that stuff. So it was sort of a trial and error kind of thing. So I asked him where he thought I should start."

Mark Goldblatt gave him a name, and that name led him to the conclusion that he needed to talk to Morgan Creek directly. "Everything goes to Morgan Creek." He says, "They are unique in that they own everything they put out. They have their own facilities, they have their own everything. They are the go to guys."

Morgan Creek keeps everything so it would seem. "They have several storage facilities all over the country," Mark continues, "I called Morgan Creek and I got transferred a few times and I finally got the guy I was looking for whose name was Andy Fraiser. And he was a really nice guy, and I guess he's in charge of all the materials ... and he said as plain as day, and this was only the third or fourth call I'd made, he just said: I can get it. I just need to make a call." And just like that, nearly 20 years later, Mark found the "Holy Grail." "My jaw dropped," Mark says, "I was like really? It's that easy and [Morgan Creek's] just sitting on it? That doesn't make any sense."

Clive was ecstatic, and even more so after he realized the length of the film that Mark had discovered. "Now we have a cut we've found that is two hours and 44 minutes long." Clive says, "It's fascinating because I didn't think ... firstly I thought there were 25 minutes we had missing, but there were 44 minutes

missing! And if we realize that that is too long, we'd take out 22 minutes and have a shorter but still much longer version. Either way we have 44 minutes of material that has NEVER been seen."

But as Mark found out, finding it might have been easy, but getting it released to the masses is a lot harder. "The distribution is the difficult part." He explains, "First I called Warner Brothers since they distributed the original DVD, which didn't have shit on it, not even a trailer."

Mark's point is echoed by many a Nightbreed fan. The original video release had an introduction by Clive included where he was standing next to some beautiful busts sculpted in the likenesses of the characters. Warner's release had nothing on it and is not even in circulation any longer. Mark's logic follows that of many fans. "I still have the video," He says, "There's no point in buying a DVD if you're going to get the same thing."

"So I asked them (Warner Brothers) if they were interested and they said they'd get back to me. Then I called Morgan Creek," Mark continues, "Morgan Creek's CFO called me back directly, and he says, like you saw on the Web site, 'There's just no market for it. The DVD has made them no money, there's no interest in it. There's not even enough interest to put it on Blu-ray.'"

With that sort of logic you would assume that another distributor could come in or another investor and buy the rights to release the film themselves. But that isn't apparently in the cards either. "You'd think that would be easy," Mark explains, "However, Morgan Creek does not sell their movies, and I was told this expressly by the CEO of Morgan Creek James G. Robinson. I called him and left a voice mail and he actually called me back, which I guess is impressive. He left a very short message on my machine that simply said, 'Nightbreed is not for sale.'"

Mark even tried another tactic. "I asked them about a special edition with a commentary track or a behind the scenes, and not even the director's cut," Mark says, "It was just a 'No across the board.'"

So my fellow 'Breed, we have a mission of our own. We need Morgan Creek to realize just what they have and the fact that we all want to see it. We want our director's cut and we want Clive's vision to be seen as he intended it.

Nightbreed means a lot to many horror fans because we tend to be looked at strangely by society because we love to be scared. We love the monsters and sometimes we can relate to them more than the so called normal people of the world. Nightbreed, as Clive imagined it, showed us we weren't alone. Its brilliance was that it held a mirror up to society and showed it how ugly it was and how beautiful the different could truly be. It's art in more ways than one and it deserves the respect it was denied when it was released nearly two decades ago.

So here is what YOU can do to help us reach our goal of getting Morgan Creek to release a director's cut special edition of Nightbreed:

Go to Clive's official site and e-mail the site admin your desire for a Nightbreed Director's Cut at [www.clivebarker.info](http://www.clivebarker.info), or e-mail: [philandisarah@clivebarker.info](mailto:philandisarah@clivebarker.info). Also, contact Morgan Creek and let your voice be heard, e-mail: [frontdesk@morgancreek.com](mailto:frontdesk@morgancreek.com) and help Clive bring the monsters out of the darkness and into the light. 🍷



## JENNIFER'S BODY



The spine-chilling sequel to *Disturbia* (Dolby) has a new film up her sleeve, as *Jennifer's Body* hits theaters everywhere this fall. Starring Megan Fox (*Transformers*), the movie revolves around a demon from hell (Fox) who uses her looks to attract and kill to teenage boys. ... Boom! Studios unveiled their plans for this graphic novel, based on the screen-adapted story, to hit stores this August. The comic will include artwork by Jim Mahfood, with alternate covers by Eric Jones (above) and Cho (below).

## JENNIFER'S BODY



At Comic-Con this past July, a limited number of comics based on the *Trick 'n' Treat* were given away at the Warner Bros. booth. Look for a TPB based on the film to follow later this year.



After the Necronomicon Ex-Mortis is found and taken to a government research lab, Jason is resurrected (thanks to Freddy, of course), to wreak havoc on the world once again - and to hunt down and kill Ash! Meanwhile, as Ash is piecing his life back together, a group of survivors from past "incidents" revolving around the horror heavy hitters, wishes to recruit Ash to help them dispose of Freddy and Jason once and for all. Presented by Wildstorm Comics and Dynamite Entertainment, this is the latest mini-series pitting three of the genre's biggest icons in this follow-up to last year's best selling hit! Now available, issue #1 comes in three variant covers (shown above)!



Shown above, Blue Water Comics have finally unleashed their new series based on the '90s horror icon of fright - Leprechaun. Thus far, the first issue (including three variant covers), as well as issue #2 has been released. Shown below is the continued storyline of Ashley Williams and the Army of Darkness (issues #21-25 shown), as well as his min-series co-hosted by the President of the United States - Ash Saves Obama (#2 shown). New installments of Marvel Zombies 4 and Vincent Price Presents is included, as well as a Convention exclusive cover to *Night of the Living Dead: New York*, which is limited to 1,000 pieces.



# COMIC BOOK FLASHBACK



**FANTACo**  
BY DAVID KOSANKE

FantaCo Entertainments may not be well known to most horrorheads these days, but back in the 1980s they were arguably one of the most influential comic book publishers on the market, and they made their mark with a veritable wellspring of projects both lovingly remembered and cherished to this very day.

Founded in 1978 by Tom Shulan, FantaCo, based out of Albany, New York, began life as a comic book store and soon turned into a profitable mail order business. Horror fans primarily became acquainted with them via their ads in every issue of Fangoria Magazine. They essentially became the Chitain Company (the legendary mail order business associated with Famous Monsters of Filmland magazine in the '60s and '70s) of their time.

The first batch of comics that FantaCo published included the *Herbick* series along with *Strain*. *Strain*, Ed. The FantaCo Chronicles series was geared toward the things gruesome thanks to the publication of Gore Shriek.

Gore Shriek was the result of a successful book publication joint that FantaCo had under their belts prior to '86 with Splitter Movies and The Amazing Herschel Gordon Lewis and His World of Exploitation Films both proving very popular with the fans. The next step was horror comics, so head honcho Tom Shulan (the original editor of Gore Shriek) launched issue #1 with legendary cover art by Bruce Spaulding Fuller. The "face ripper" art became iconic in its own right, as it made for a nifty T-shirt which FantaCo capitalized on, and which Rollen Collins resurrected last year. Fuller himself is perhaps better known these days as an accomplished trick and special effects wizard, having teamed up with KNB on various movie projects, including *Bride of Dr. Armitage* and *Army of Darkness*, to name but a few.

Also in issue #1 was the short piece "Cotnamouth" by noted artist Steve Bissette of Swamp Thing fame. Interestingly enough, "Cotnamouth" became a short film that fans can view on the Net. Bissette went onto become editor of Gore Shriek starting with #5 and helped star Gore Shriek in the right direction (including adding articles into the proceedings). Another key contributor to Gore Shriek was Greg Capullo, whose eye catching cover art in issue #4 cannot be forgotten once viewed. Capullo went on to even greater success working on the extremely popular *Spawn* series with Todd McFarlane.

Chris Babin also worked on Gore Shriek, including a hilarious two page spread in issue #5 for "Zombie Buzzsaw Apocalypse 2000 A.D." Chris was notorious at this time for his work with *Deep Red*, the seminal underground horror fanzine that FantaCo also published which helped assure him of legendary cult status that he came to this very day.

The second volume of Gore Shriek arrived in 1990 and became a more prominent showcase for the wild artwork of Gurdash Singh (affectionately known as "The Gurdash") who dropped out of view shortly afterwards and remains something of an enigma.

Gore Shriek ended in 1991 with Volume 2, Issue #3. Besides the regular series, an annual was published in 1990, and a special digest sized comic numbered 6.5 also appeared (and was sold exclusively through FantaCo, even though it was intended as a treatise to all those fans who attended the FantaCo shows between 1970-1990). Finally, the Gore Shriek Deluxus arrived in 1989 and reprinted the best stories from the first volume packed inside a soft cover edition that became the only book format version of the series that exists to this day.

Next up was Shriek which only lasted three issues, and was meant as a companion piece, but it never took off. Incidentally two characters created by Shulan and designed by Bissette named Gore and Shriek became the mascots (shades of the Copt Keeper etc. as pioneered by EC Comics three decades prior), and both publications spotlighted their mischievous exploits, but their legacy isn't nearly as well regarded as some of their other contemporaries in the field.

FantaCo scored another hit with their adaptation of George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* comic which was popular enough to spawn both prequel and sequel issues, including one by prolific horror writers Clive Barker and Steve Niles, which itself turned into the 1993 series *Night of the Living Dead*.

*Night's Children* was a vampire series created by Wendy Show Lang that became another success for FantaCo, especially given the female angle that wasn't too common in the horror field at the time, but seen today it would perhaps prove even more popular with *Twilight* and *The Blood* being all the rage amongst the bloodsucker connoisseurs. The sequel to *Night's Children* was entitled *Vampyr* and was published in 1992.

As the '90s wore on FantaCo relied more on a series of girl files including *The Amazon Women* comics of 1987. The horror boom seemingly petered out in the early '90s, and FantaCo as a whole ceased to exist as of 1998. The void they left, both as a publisher and mail order business, was never fully filled, and with the internet taking hold in the late '90s, perhaps the writing was on the wall.

Never-the-less today a renewed interest in the FantaCo titles is long overdue, and the underground circuit is still breathing life into the popular Gore Shriek titles ensuring that these cutting edge stories and artwork never go unnoticed since they pushed the envelope further than most titles were doing back in the '80s and can be seen as a key link in horror comics, starting with the EC titles of the '50s, then with the Warren publications of the '60s and '70s, thus making them essential horror history for all Horrorheads who enjoy blood soaked comical!



# MAKING THE MINER: MY BLOODY VALENTINE

BY AARON CROWELL

It all started with a spark that then grew to a flame, followed by a passionate fire that burned brighter and brighter until it finally consumed me. That is the best description I can offer for my besetting desire to recreate the most screen accurate *My Bloody Valentine* 3-D Miner costume possible. Once I learned that the necessary ingredients to piece together this costume were almost all obtainable, with the exception of a few custom-made pieces, I began the challenge. People often forget that custom costumes can be versatile prop replicas that can be placed on mannequins, creating an eerie conversation piece to any collection room. Seriously, what's better than showing someone your own life-sized *My Bloody Valentine* Miner custom made collectible? I have always been a huge fan of the original 1981 slasher classic, even more so now that we finally have the uncensored DVD release. I also highly enjoyed the new remake film in 3D. In fact, I think the new miner design is much scarier and more intense looking than the original. I learned that director Patrick Lussier oversaw every detail of the film. Viewing nearly every obtainable gas mask from every era of warfare and from various countries around the world before making his final decision on which one to use in the remake. In fact, he had the choice of reusing the original mask, but wanted the new mask (and film) to have a more authentic look all its own. The quest began with a few Internet forum searches (theima.net, rightwings.com and Michael Myers.net), posing a few questions and reading threads written by other dedicated fans like me who had a leg up and were gracious enough to help me along the way. I quickly began to learn that this was going to be a costly venture if I really wanted to go all out. Being the obsessive compulsive freak I am, and much to the wife's dismay, I indeed went all out. So let's break down my costume and where you can get everything you need, how to make what you cannot buy and a few short cuts for you budget-minded folks looking to mine some scares of your own. At any rate, I will do my best to help all of you crazy fans who may attempt to build your own costume, but be sure to send in your finished Miner costume pics to *HorrorHound Magazine* - so we can show the world what sick and devoted hounds we all are!

**Helmet:** MSA Comflo-Cap visor (any color will work since you can paint it black, just be sure to weather it a touch before you spray it, or the original color will bleed through). The correct MSA Black Miner Helmet (cost around \$60 to \$80) has an adjustable liner which is not needed. The helmet is simply fitted with industrial strength Velcro to the front and back of the gas mask for a more snug fit. In the film, the Miner also has a rectangular piece of duct tape on the left side of his helmet. Cut the estimated size (be sure to use the correct width) off the tape roll and stick it on the left center of the side of your helmet.

**Nylon Balaclava** (or quality black hunting or paintball hood). Any brand that is solid black will do fine, be sure to avoid textures and keep it as smooth, sleek and tight as possible for comfort. It covers your hair, neck, and ears, and makes for a more comfortable fit with the tight gas mask. Of course, it was also used in the film. These can cost as much as \$15 to \$20.

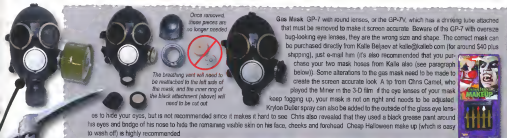
**Light and Battery:** You will need a real mining Koalher Wheel Caplamp (with battery charger). This item will cost you a pretty penny (as much as \$300-plus now); however, if you are patient (and lucky), you can get one on eBay used for around \$150 to \$200 plus shipping. Thrifty fans can buy a costume miner helmet that comes fitted with a (AA) battery powered light from most Halloween costume outlets online for under \$10 plus shipping (but the helmet will have to be painted black).

**Dark Navy Blue Long-Sleeve Coveralls:** Dickies w/ zippers on chest and hammer hoop on backside of lower leg (cost: \$35-40). First, use a pair of small scissors to remove the two red Dickies logo tags. Then, you will need to weather the suit a bit for better effect. Sandpaper, jagged rocks and a little imagination can make this possible. A black or navy blue undershirt with a tight neck (or turtle neck) is also needed (cost: \$10-15).

**Miner Belt:** The belt seen in the film was custom made, then stained and distressed by the effects crew. The screen accurate belt can be purchased from the original crafts person at Beth's Custom Leather in Pittsburgh, PA for \$80 plus shipping. She can also make a less expensive version that is thinner (for around \$55-60). To contact Beth, call 724-245-1215 and let her see what you! Remember all the detail work, including staining and weathering is up to you. I used mahogany colored Fiebing's Leather Dye and a hammer to get the desired look, but be careful not to hit the buckles with the hammer. I also recommend testing the belt a lot to loosen it up. Beth has made miner belts before and revealed that they have extra straps for all the added tools of the trade on both sides. In the case of the Miner's belt from the film, it was really to hold the custom hose canister and Koalher Caplamp Battery (which is heavy as hell by the way). Be sure to have it made a bit longer than needed in order to fold the surplus of the belt back for added screen accuracy.

**Miner's Boots:** Easy to obtain, but very expensive. They are simply Rocky 101 Men's Blizzard Stalker (1200 Brown) Boots (cost \$120) from Rocky's online store. They come in two styles and colors that can be dined or weathered, depending on your level of anti-realism. I went with the all black Blizzard Stalkers instead since you only see the toe anyway and they look better in well lit environments (as well as giving you added height).

**Muscle Suit:** Actor Chris Carmel also revealed that under his Dickies coveralls, he wore a padded upper-body muscle suit to add a ripped and ruffianous look to the Miner since Chris is an average sized guy (who stands about 5' 10" without the boots on), the muscle suit made the coveralls fit a bit tighter and filled out the character's upper physique. I simply added a bit of padding to my shoulders and let that ride since the muscle suit was tailor made.



to hide your eyes, but is not recommended since it makes it hard to see. Chris also revealed that they used a black grease paint around his eyes and bridge of his nose to hide the remaining visible skin on his face, cheeks and forehead. Chap Halloween make up (which is easy to wash off) is highly recommended.



Pull the hose through this fitting. Don't worry, unless you tug hard, it will not come out.

**Black Gloves** The actual gloves from the film are red (Vlad's Lament), so I used the next best thing: a pair of new black Wells Lamont Work Series 2500 gloves. They are very similar to the ones from the film and come in different sizes (so be sure to try them on before you buy them). They cost \$12 and can be purchased at Walmart. The removal of the Wells Lamont logo from the Velcro strip is easy, just take a small pair of manicuring scissors, peel it back and snip each little piece of thread until it comes off. Then, pull out the remaining black thread, and you are good to go (see figure A).

**Gas Mask Hoses** (Above) These suckers can pose a problem, and two of them are required to get the correct length (they are always, once purchased, in order to hook together correctly with two hose clamps and a piece of broom stick/wood). Once you get the hoses, remove all but one connector (keep the one that will hook to the canister, as well as the pieces removed from the other hoses). Removal of these connectors can be a pain, but be careful and use a few tools to "get-it-done." You also need a 1 1/2 inch slip joint reducer which can be found in the plumbing section of your local hardware store. The washers are not needed, only the silver nut that attaches to the top of the black hose connected to the base of the mask. Take the black threaded connection piece and sand the top till this nut snaps over it, locking it in place. This is necessary since it is the only way to have the silver ring (seen on the screen-used gas mask). I was told there was nothing to use to get the silver ring effect on the top of the hose since it was glued in place in the film, but I figured it out and am passing that info onto you. To purchase the hoses needed (seen on my costume), contact Kalle Baljaev at kalle@kalleb.com who sells the hoses for \$5 a piece (\$12 for both hoses plus shipping). If you already have a mask that is, in my opinion, best to simply purchase the gas mask and hoses from Kalle together. Just e-mail him about the two hoses and GP-7 gas mask for a total with shipping and tell him *Horrorhound sent you!*



**Forearm Covers** This was a great tip passed on by stuntman Chris Carmel that really helps bring the costume together. All you need are some fairly long black dress socks, then simply cut out thumb and finger holes before sliding them over your forearms. I purchased a pair for \$2 from a department store. They hide your forearm skin - especially when you raise that pick over your head to deliver that fatal blow, or pose for a picture (see figure B).



**Gas Mask Hose Canister** (Above) This box-shaped device which connects to the hose that wraps around the Miner's back was tailor made for the costume, although it doesn't serve any function as confirmed by actor/stuntman Chris Carmel, who spent long periods of time gasping for air inside the Miner's gas mask. A great option is a boiled linseed oil can (cost about \$8) that needs to be sanded, primed, and then painted black. You will also need to glue the threaded hose attachment to the top of the can. Be sure to use something that will hold strong, like two part epoxy (be very careful here). A black nylon pouch to house the canister on the belt of the Miner is also needed, so you are going to have to be clever on that one. I simply purchased a cheap pair of binoculars from Harbor Freight Tools (for \$12) that came with a black pouch. A few alterations, including the addition of Velcro (to hold the canister in tight), and cutting two belt loops is needed.

**Pick Axe** You will want a railroad pick axe since it has the desired look (it's hard to say what brand of pick axes were used in the film since so many different styles are seen). Heading out to a local flea market can be a great way to find one, that has a used, more distressed look. It should also be a lot cheaper than buying a new one. If you want or need (like I did) to purchase a new one you will want a Lufkin 6 lb. Railroad Pick with a yellow fiberglass handle that can be purchased at Home Depot for \$32. Send and paint the handle either black or brown. Next, once you are done painting the handle, add a matte clear coat spray sealer to lock in the color. It helps to prevent scuffing and scratching that might expose that ugly yellow fiberglass underneath. You can also add a dried blood effect with any paint that you feel looks like blood before you seal it, if you so desire. Don't forget to dull down the tips - they are dangerous!





# THE HOUSE THAT TODD BUILT

A History of the 7" Scale Movie Maniac • from McFarlane to Now  
• By Nathan Hanneman

They hide under your bed, they lurk in the closet - and when you're asleep, they attack your nightmares. They are the undead, the supernatural, the unstoppable killing machines - or to us modern day horror fans (or as I like to call us, the SLASHER KIDS) like to call them - the Movie Maniacs! In 1998 Todd McFarlane's growing popularity in the collectible industry was like a monster unto itself. Prior to this ever-important year, Todd had ripped from the shackles of his power-house boss known as Marvel Comics. Along with a motley crew of artists and writers (including Erik Larsen, Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld), Todd left Marvel and co-created the independent comic book company known as Image. Under this Image brand, each creator was given complete ownership and control of their own creations. Under Image, Todd McFarlane then created the sub-company known as McFarlane Productions. With sales peaking higher than their former employer's, McFarlane's *Spawn* comic book became a bonafide hit. Over the years, it has received spin-offs in the form of animated television programming and a feature film. With the growth probabilities seemingly endless, Todd no doubt wished to escort *Spawn* into the realm of merchandising - specifically into the action figure world. After project meetings (and what looked like a deal to bring *Spawn* into the toy aisles) with Mattel - Todd became frustrated at the company's inability to meet his demands: detailed action figures that delivered on the sculpts AND paint ups, something both kids and adults would be interested in purchasing. Just like his realization in the comic book industry, Todd decided if he wanted things his way, he was destined to do it himself. With that, McFarlane Toys was formed in 1994.

## Movie Maniacs

An instant success, McFarlane's 7" scaled *Spawn* action figures (which he trained to use the art on delivering the detail and paint ups) for the time - in what he dubbed "Ultra Detail" and helped usher in unprecedented sets of independent comic book-to-toy connections, something unheard of at the time. Erik Larsen's *Savage Dragon* was given toy treatment thanks to Playmates. Marc Silvestri's *Cyberforce* received similar treatment from Mattel - while McFarlane himself replicated characters from White Portland's *Webwork* and Rob Lauder's *Youngblood* (while other characters such as Sam Keith's *Maxx* appeared in the *Spawn* line itself). With this success, Todd began to expand his reach into the world outside of comic books - the first idea he projected was McFarlane's Monsters, a mini-figure and diorama set that reimaged such classics as *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and *The Mummy*. Then, in 1997, the *KISS* action figure line was revealed. Easily the biggest hit, *KISS* (along with *Spawn*) had shaken the collector world, which at the time focused mostly on vintage toys - *Star Wars* and *GI Joe*. Now new collectors were being created and McFarlane Toys was thriving. Then, everything changed in 1998.

Working out of Arizona, a LONG hop and skip away from the heart of action figure central (mostly the Midwest, ranging from Ohio to New York), Todd had to look outside of his comfort zone to see his visions come to life. Freelance sculptors out of Cincinnati and New Jersey were hired to create the first assortments of McFarlane's new toys; however, permanent placement was needed and the formation of McFarlane Toys studio in New Jersey was created. Pulling some of the best talent around, it was this pack of artists that helped give life to the ideas behind the *Spawn* and *Monsters* toy lines. As accounts would reveal, it was the consistent meetings from this Jersey branch that planted the idea of producing licensed movie monsters to toy aisles, stemming from the brain of horror fan Eric Tressway. With the always-in-production *Freddy vs. Jason* feature film in the works, Todd agreed to a proposal, and work began on the first action figures of these two immortal icons in horror. In 1998 (as most horror fans can attest), *Freddy vs. Jason* was as far from release as imaginable, and Todd was forced to make a decision as to what these powerhouse characters can do for his company. Instead of scrapping the idea, another legend of horror - Texas Chainsaw Massacre's Leatherface - was brought onboard (as part of what's known as the New Line House of Horrors), as well as Patrick and Eve from *Species* (the sequel of which was just released), and at the San Diego Comic Con that year - Movie Maniacs was revealed!

An instant hit - this toy line did something beyond just the obvious (i.e., bringing *Freddy*, *Jason* and *Leatherface* into our homes as action figures) - it was the first time packaging of such an assortment of characters under one brand was estab-

lished. Not since the Universal Monsters has an array of characters been available to retailers as a single line of products. The Movie Maniacs was a name that could entrap any film series' baddies, from Pumpkinhead to Candyman (and later, heroes such as Snake Plissken and Edward Scissorhands), and packaged as one strong license (and it did). The sculpts were ultra detailed and based in principle on the classic Aurora model kits of the '60s and '70s, in that they presented dynamic poses, complete with movie poster marquee.

After the first assortment of Maniacs were released, a large fanbase sprung up overnight. Suddenly people who were not collecting action figures were sucked in. Web sites devoted to McFarlane Toys were created and the never-ending "requests" starting pouring in, with fans begging for plastic interpretations of anything from *Julie (Return of the Living Dead 3)* to the mutant bear from *Prophecy!* The most requested figure right off the bat was, of course, Michael Myers (*Halloween*) and Ash (*Army of Darkness*). In fact, Ash proved so popular, his namesake "Evil Ash" followed, as well as a special two-pack featuring the duo and an additional two-pack with the Pit Witch! *Eric Draven* (The Crow, a horror film character) also appeared to great response (it was followed by a "fanbank" re-release and a 12" version of the character). Other icons followed, including *The Wishmaster*, creatures from *The Thing*, *The Fly*, *Norman Bates* (*Psycho*), *Jason X*, *Chucky* and *Tiffany* (*Bride of Chucky*) and *Darkness* (from *Legend*). Of note - an early concept of the *Tooth Fairy* (*Darkness Falls*) was produced, prior to the film's title creature being completely redesigned by Stan Winston, giving reason as to why toy companies do not usually gamble on new properties. While these toys were ushered out, new companies began to pop up, making their own brand of Movie Maniacs (but more on that later).

At the same time the Maniacs brand was unveiled, Todd also moved into licensing newer film titles, specifically X-Files, which had an animated film due in 1998. While X-Files didn't prove a hit, the idea of 7" scaled movie characters outside of Movie Maniacs was pushed across the toy industry, and within Todd's own company. *Austin Powers* followed in 1999 and in 2000, *Sleepy Hollow* (starring Johnny Depp) resulted in a three-figure assortment (and an impressive box set featuring the Headless Horseman on his sized and elaborate base)! As the Movie Maniacs line continued (including larger size and oddball releases such as *King Kong*, *Jaws*, and the introduction of 18" scale talking figures - whose release was the direct result of fans asking for the two-up prototypes generally shown at Toy Fair), more mainstream licenses such as *Terminator 2*, *Aliens* and *Predator* were introduced into the line. These bigger properties obviously drew a larger crowd, and eventually McFarlane's Maniacs began to focus solely on these characters (in fact, entire lines were produced for both *Alien* and *Predator* while *Terminator 3* (a new film) was also





given its own series). With oversaturation of figures in the marketplace, and a lack of A-squad options for McFarlane to choose from, the final *Maniacs* in release were RoboCop, an assortment of characters from the new *North* line of Texas Chainsaw Massacre, and a box set of characters from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (the box set of two figures was rumored to be a part of the final wave of cancelled *Maniacs*, which was set to include the films *Donnie Darko*, *The Ring* and *RoboCop 2*). With the final *Maniacs* giving way to a more mainstream product line-up (which now included *The Matrix* and *Alien*), McFarlane's horror products petered out (final licensed genre merch included 3-D poster renderings), almost mirroring Todd's company as it stands today. Focused on sports figures, McFarlane Toys has cancelled almost all of their original products, including horror and music figures, original "McFarlanez" in-house brands (like *Monsters*, *Clive Barker's Tortured Souls* and *Dragons*), and Spawen itself has all but disappeared from the market. Plagued with massive layoffs stemmed from poor sales and a suffering economy, it will be interesting to see whether Todd can get his company back to its glory days (which one would assume has to include horror toys!).

Below is a list of toy companies that have captured the spirit of "McFarlanez" action figures (as the term has been coined). While some never fully matched the quality of Movie Maniacs, their work in the industry is unquestionably influenced by the work of McFarlane Toys, who set the precedent.

#### Reds Inc.

Almost not worth mentioning due to their inaccurate sculpting and lack of mass production, Reds Inc. out of Japan was significant for their 7" scale releases of unlicensed *Dawn of the Dead* and *Toxic Avenger* action figures. This was the first time *Dawn of the Dead* figures were produced in such a format, and they delivered four figures, including Flyboy, Tom Savini's character "Blade," the bald-headed zombie and Machete-Zombie. Of these, only Flyboyzies been remastered thanks to NECA Toys.

#### Paisades Marketing

One of the early McFarlane-style otakuish toy companies was Paisades Marketing. While more famous for their *Muppets* toy line and series of *Alien/Predator* resin collectibles, the company was not without its horror share. "Kon Lilu, the driving creative force behind Paisades, is a horror fan and *House of the Dead* and *Resident Evil* were definite labor of love for him." Sculptor Jerry Macaluso added about Paisade's launch, which included these video game properties: "He saw how well McFarlane was doing with horror figures, and he made the connection that Paisades could become to horror video games what McFarlane was to horror films." With the phenom that *Resident Evil* became, many of Paisade's figures continue to demand big bucks on the secondary market. While no genre film licenses were spawned from this company in the 7" format, the in-scale zombies became a very valued and collectible asset to horror merch fans (and in later years, many of these *Maniac*-scaled toys did become on-screen characters (Tucker, Tyrant, Nemesis) as part of the *Resident Evil* film franchise, and fit in well with any licensed-horror collector's display). While the company did not last, some of their final figure contributions were 3 1/2" figures based on Sam Raimi's *Army of Darkness*.

#### Resaurus Toys

Resaurus Toys, another newly-launched toy company (at the peak of the Spawen figure boom) was another video game-centric business, with licenses such as *Duke Nukem*, *Street Fighter* and *Crash Bandicoot* being their most iconic releases. Outside of *The North* (a horror-themed comic-turned toy line), Resaurus' major film license contributions came in the form of *Godzilla* collectibles (based on the horrible US remake from 1998) and *Wipe* - a supposed blockbuster that eventually saw limited release, bombing theatrically. Resaurus' toy line from the film had 6" scaled figures (four single-carded and one *Gotham* box set). While similar to McFarlane in style, Resaurus could not match Todd's product value and sculpting, causing too many risky ventures before the company finally went out of business.

#### Atotech Toys / Art Asylum / Mezzo

At the 2000 New York Toy Fair, a new toy company emerged named Atotech Toys. A joint venture from Mike "Mez" Markowitz and "Digger" (Art Asylum), this new company's first toy reveal was in the form of the *Silent Screamers* - a 7" scale horror series based on public domain genre characters from the silent screen era (specifically *Nosferatu* and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*). Atotech didn't last long, and soon split into two separate toy production companies - Art Asylum and Mezzo Toys.

Art Asylum had been a freelance design studio for many years leading up to McFarlane Toys' reinvention on the marketplace, allowing sculptors to promote their more detailed work to an audience that actually cared. After Atotech ended, Art Asylum tried their hand at producing figures on their own, which led to a very hot wave of licenses, including 7" scale figures for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, TV's *Dark Angel*, *Say Yes* and music figures of Eminem (their own produced a number of 18" music product headlined by KISS and other musicians McFarlane Toys had just established itself). In 2008, Art Asylum was bought out by Diamond Comics.

*Silent Screamers* continued for one series under the Mezzo umbrella (and included *Metropolis*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Edson's Frankenstein* and *The Golem*), but was soon replaced for newer products. Over the years, Mezzo has produced an original zombie figure line (*Attack of the Living Dead*), as well as licensed products for *Reservoir Dogs*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *The Warriors*, *Underworld*, *King Kong*, *Alien*, *Predator*, *Army of Darkness* and *New Line's House of Horrors*; however, outside of *Reservoir Dogs*, none of the licenses listed included 6-7" scale "ultra detail" figures (instead focusing on Mez-itz block-o-figures, mini-scale and characterized toys). It wasn't until 2004 when Mezzo returned to this figure scale, thanks to licensed toys based on the new *Guillermo del Toro* film, *Hellboy* (a follow-up was released for *Hellboy 2* in 2008). In 2007, Mezzo finally unveiled their first 7" scale horror movie-centric toy line in the form of *Cinema of Fear: Acquiring the New Line Cinema's House of Horror's master toy license*. Mezzo revealed a four-figure assortment made up of *Freddy Krueger*, *Jason Voorhees*, *Leatherface* and *Chop-top* (a highly requested "TCM" Part 2 character). After three additional waves (consisting of the "Elm Street," *Friday* the 13th and the "TCM" licenses), Mezzo also unveiled new products for the *Friday* the 13th remake and *Rob Zombie's Halloween 2* (shown this issue). More *Cinema of Fear* figures have been planned; however, nothing has been announced as of press time. With the New Line license heading back to NECA (read below), it will be interesting what direction COF takes.

#### Sideshow Toy

Or as they are known today, Sideshow Collectibles, this upstart company launched out of the gate with an impressive array of model kits, followed by 7-8" and 12" scaled figures from the world of *Bruce Lee*, *Batman*, *Vampire Slayer* and *Universal Monsters*. While they have since become known for their 12" and 18" scale figure statues, Sideshow Toy became very popular to horror fans for their 7-8" scale *Universal Monsters*. Released in consistent waves of three figures per assortment, Sideshow reintroduced these iconic characters to a small scale toy line not seen since the 1970s. Not only did they produce the major players, such as *Wolf Man*, *Frankenstein's Monster* and *Creature*, but they also gave us some of our first toy interpretations (or rare inclusions) of the *Bride of Frankenstein*, the *Invisible Man*, *Mole Man*, *Melanie Munst* - and the first wide-released likeness approved *Bela Lugosi's Dracula* figure. This was also the first major horror toy line that penetrated bigger toy department store chains such as *Target* and *Toys 'R Us*. Aside from *Bruce Lee*, this was the only 7-8" scale figure line Sideshow produced before focusing solely on higher end (and limited edition) products, as well as an online-only sales structure.

## Winston Toys

Throughout McFarlane's interpretations of such icons from cinema as *Predator*, *Alien*, *Edward Scissorhands* and *Pumpkinhead*, one man saw this newfound interest in such characters as more than just a fad. Stan Winston, the FX Legend, had created many of these on-screen monsters and decided the toy industry was ready for more of his mad genius. After reportedly attempting to work a deal with McFarlane Toys to develop a line of characters from the brain of the Oscar award winning designer, Winston saw that creating his own toy company (as Todd McFarlane did years earlier) was the best route to ensure his creations saw the light of day (under his creative guidance). Stan's first toy line, *Creature Features* (based on the anthology-style *Showtime* film series) was a 7" scaled high-end action figure series that was only available at Toys 'R Us stores - and at the time cost a pretty penny. Packed with a masking-of DVD (innovative for its time), the toys retailed for around \$16 each (although seemingly fair by today's market, most figures at the time retailed for \$10 or less). After *Creature Features*, Winston unleashed non-film related material that focused on a world of canyons, werewolves, gargoyles and Heavy Metal-inspired cyber punk characters. With no major drive, limited retail options (and a hefty price tag), Winston was unable to release his last planned series of figures, opting to allow newcomer NECA to produce and distribute his last series. It seemed most fans were more excited about Winston's on-screen creations rather than his made-for-toy shelf heroes and villains...

## N2 Toys

While not a company that produced horror movie figures, N2 Toys is worth mentioning for their blatant exploitation of the McFarlane-style movie figure industry. Possibly the biggest licensee N2 released was based on *The Matrix*. A surprise hit film, N2 was lucky enough to have acquired the rights to this feature, producing a number of 6-7" scale figures of Neo, Trinity, Mr. Smith and others. McFarlane Toys eventually captured the rights to this film as the underwhelming sequels were coming out. N2 is also known for their out-licensed toys from *The Road Warrior* and John Carpenter's *Big Trouble in Little China* (of which an impressive six-figure assortment of characters were developed). A 'Maniacs-style' compilation line of 'movie bad-asses' (dubbed *Hardened*) was developed with only Rambo, Steven Segal, and Steve McQueen (Buñuel) seeing release (other characters were planned, but cancelled, including *Leone*, *The Professional*, *El Manach* from *Desperado* and Robert DeNiro from *Taxi Driver*). An unproduced series based on Luc Besson's *Fifth Element* and *Gladiator* was also scrapped. N2 turned into Mirage, where they produced figures for *Alien* and *South Park* before, again, going out of business.

## Stevenson Entertainment Group

Not really a significant chapter in the world of the 7" scale action figure, SEG was known more for licensed movie toys and merchandise (including *Metallica*, *Pink Floyd* and *The Offspring*). Following the release of Rob Zombie's *House of 1000 Corpses* in 2000, it was SEG that saw the appeal and possibility in this fledgling horror classic. A series of four figures (and a box set) was issued for the film, which included the only toy interpretation of *The Professor*. Soon after, NECA had acquired the rights to this film and continued releasing figures based on it (and its sequel). After a failed 7" scale attempt at *Alien* figures, SEG finally disappeared.

## NECA

While McFarlane Toys had started focusing on larger-scale 'horror' licenses, such as *Annihilator*, *Alien* and *Predator*, a void began to form - with horror fans desiring for the more obscure (i.e., cult) characters from genre cinema to be developed into action figures. After all - such names as *Pinhead*, *Regan MacNeil* and *Tall Man* were still untapped material! Then NECA unleashed their horror brand, aptly titled *Cult Classics* into the world. NECA, a mostly-music industry themed memorabilia company out of New Jersey, is the branch of Joel Weintraub. While dabbling in the world of toys, one of NECA's first releases was an all-out toy figure based on Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice*. While larger in scale than McFarlane's *Movie Maniacs*, the toy line was an ambitious move for a seemingly newcomer. In 1999,

Randy Falk (a product of McFarlane Toys) came on board (as Product Manager) and took over action figure production for NECA, bringing in an assortment of talent from this new world of ultra detail sculpting. His first two major releases from this company was an 18" scale Jason Voorhees (the most requested large-scale figure McFarlane had yet to deliver) and *Pinhead* - of *Hellraiser* fame. But it was the fact that *Pinhead* saw release in a *Hellraiser* toy line - rather than a single-issue line - that cemented NECA as the fanboy's newest and favorite toy company. *Suburban*, *Chatterbox*, *Julie*, *Cad* and many of the other minor *Coronities* were given toy treatment in a line devised by Randy - and the rest is history! Over the following years, NECA's newly dubbed *Cult Classics* saw such characters in toy form as *Tall Man*, *Ash* (*Army of Darkness*), *Palooka Balam* (*American Psycho*), *Chucky*, *Dr. Myers* (*Halloween*), *Pamela Voorhees* (*Friday the 13th*), *Bubba Ho-Tep*, *David* and *Michael* (*Lost Boys*), *Hannibal Lecter*, *Shaun* (*of the Dead*), *Jigsaw* (*Saw*) and so many others. NECA also released both 12" and 18" figures based on their many licenses. Established originally by McFarlane Toys, NECA has easily produced more 18" scale more horror action figures than any other company listed in this article, making them a true Horrorhound's best friend! Lunchboxes, shot glasses, key neckties, blankets, shoes, shirts and so many other novelty items were produced (and continue to be) for many of their licenses.

In between 'CC' releases, NECA also unveiled toy lines dedicated to such films as *House of 1000 Corpses*, *The Devil's Rejects*, *Gmeline*, *Ghastbusters*, *AVP2*, *Grindhouse* and *Terminator 2* - all sculpted to scale with those *Movie Maniacs* we all know and love. Sadly, as of print date, NECA's figure releases have taken a more McFarlane approach than fans would like. With *Cult Classics* (as a line) seemingly non-existent throughout 2009, one-shot characters (*Trick 'r Treat*'s Sam and Skeeks (*The Dark Crystal*, who was planned as one of the figures in the last CC series)) were dumped to stores without a CC tag. While the market is in a decline, NECA has put forth most of their focus toward larger (sure bet) licenses such as *Harry Potter* and *Twilight*, as well as the more popular video game genre (*Resident Evil*, *Street Fighter*, *Gears of War*). At the 2009 San Diego Comic-Con, however, NECA did reveal their plans to relaunch *Cult Classics* by the end of the year, with both a new version of *Beetlejuice*, the inclusion of action-cult film *Boonrock Saints*, and re-released figures from past successes as the launching point. Starting in 2010 NECA has reacquired the New Line House of Horrors license and will take back the reigns of Freddy Krueger and Jason Voorhees merchandise with major plans set to tackle all forms of this killer duo, including Jackie Earle Haley's *Freddy* from the remake of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*.

## SOTA Toys

In the midst of NECA's newfound success with horror (thanks to *Hellraiser* and *Cult Classics*), SOTA Toy company founder, Jerry Macaluso, decided it was by time for someone to step in and deliver some of the even more obscure genre licenses for us horror fans! 'SOTA Toys' was formed around 1997 when I started doing sculpture for the *Re-Animator*. Jerry Macaluso stated, "Plastic Fantasy [a post-apocalyptic star-based by company] was formed in 2001. Plastic Fantasy was the first time I manufactured an action figure, but I had developed dozens of them for other companies well before I ever formed Plastic Fantasy. Really, Plastic Fantasy was the offshoot of SOTA Toys." Although SOTA was not a horror-only toy company, the genre was always Jerry's #1 goal. I had even sculpted a *Pumpkinhead* and an *Ash* figure well before McFarlane announced theirs." Jerry added, "I just didn't know how to go about licensing them. I had called the studios, but didn't get anywhere. Then in 1998, I acquired the rights to *Re-Animator* and 'Bride' from Brian Yuzis. Brian was going to be my breakout into manufacturing. But I couldn't get the money together. I got going, so the rights went back to Brian in 2001, well before I started. Now Plastic Fantasy wasn't until the money started to pour in from the Plastic Fantasy sales that Jerry

was able to use the funds to go to Universal and make a deal for a bunch of their properties. "This was even before SOTA Toys had released *Tomb Raider* (our first figure line). I bought the following rights all in one big package deal. Back to the Future, The Bride, The Thing, Legend, Tremors, Dune, An American Werewolf in London, Darkman, The Mummy Returns... I might be forgetting one or two..." Jerry continues, "I was aware that my selections were mostly B-movies and probably wouldn't sell as well as *Freddy* or *Jason*, but I am a huge horror geek and I felt if I didn't do it they might never get done. I just hoped we could at least break even and justify the expense." Now Playline's first assortment of characters featured the Toxic Avenger, Darkman and the nightmare demons from "AWOL (all four)." Toxic Avenger was by far the best seller which surprised me as I thought it would be Darkman. The Nazi Demons (which Universal made us change to Nightmare Demons) didn't do that well." After another wave of characters (including a Killer Clown from Outer Space, the creeper from *Jeepers Creepers* and 1955's *The Mummy*), box sets and 18" figures (also featuring Darkness from *Legend*, Pumpkinhead and MacReady from *The Thing*), the Now Playing line was already lagging at retail (partially from delayed products and increased price points). By series 3 the writing was on the wall - Jerry sold his stake in SOTA - and the company nearly disappeared altogether. Other notable products included a series of *Lord of the Dead* action figures, *Riddick* (Vin Diesel's Pitch Black sequel), and an assortment of resin collectibles. Since leaving SOTA, Jerry has been working on a new project that could see new McFarlane-esque horror products at retail sometime in 2010!

#### Amok Time Toys

A 15-year-plus toy store (online and brick 'n mortar) out of New Jersey, Amok began their action figure exploits in 2008 with the announcement (and release) of 7" scale figures based on George A. Romero's *Day of the Dead*. With only Bub and Dr. Tongue under their belt, Amok have also revealed plans for a number of additional figures (and licenses), including Killer Clown from *Outer Space*, Elvira, *Return of the Living Dead* and *Re-Animator*. Although only the *Day of the Dead* figures have yet to hit stores, Amok's stock among hardcore horror aficionados is definitely high. Amok is also known for their new series of 12" scale figures based on classic films such as *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* and *Blackula*.

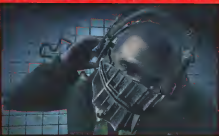
## HORROR GAMING:



Konami Digital Entertainment, Inc. has announced the latest installment in the long talked about video game spin-off of *Saw*, based on the popular Lionsgate horror franchise. Due in stores this October for the XBOX 360, Playstation 3 and PC, *Saw* will follow the "survival horror" subgenre of video gaming. In a one-player, third-person perspective horror game. The title features many of the deadly mechanical traps seen in the films, as well as terrifying new ones. Players will pit their wits against Jigsaw as they navigate his world in an attempt to evade and escape his gruesome traps while also struggling against his minions in brutal combat by using weapons found within the environment.

*Saw*, the video game, is based on a treatment from Zombie Studios and the creators of the *Saw* franchise, Leigh Whannell and James Wan. The timeline for the game takes place between the first two movies, giving the game its own story, yet fitting within the narratives of the films.

The story centers on Detective David Tapp who awakens in a decrepit, abandoned asylum. Captured by Jigsaw, Tapp must play a deadly game, and in order to survive, he must defeat the lethal traps and puzzles that Jigsaw has put in place for him. To learn more about this game visit [www.konami.com/saw/](http://www.konami.com/saw/)



Also in stores this fall from Konami is another installment in the uber popular *Silent Hill* video game series. *Silent Hill: Shattered Memories* follows the story of Harry Mason, who wakes up after a car accident to find that his daughter Cheryl is missing. Harry will wander the snowy streets of *Silent Hill* searching for answers of her disappearance, but when the world freezes over, he will need to escape the lumbering demons that haunt his steps. Harry needs to navigate both worlds to discover the truth, not just about his missing daughter, but also the type of person he actually is.

A re-imagining of the original *Silent Hill* that turns everything you thought you knew on its head, this will mark *Silent Hill*'s debut on the Nintendo Wii, making the fear more real than ever before. Players will be drawn into the mysterious town using the Wii Remote as a flashlight and a cell phone as they search for clues. Choices they make will shape Harry Mason, as well as the people he meets and the places he visits. The enemies evolve as well, taking the form of the player's deepest fears. The game also features an all-new soundtrack by acclaimed series composer Akira Yamaoka. *Silent Hill* promises to be more terrifying than ever, bringing the fear to Wii, PS2 and PSP.



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# The PERSECUTION of the INNOCENT

CHAPTER 1: THE INQUISITION & THE BURNING TIMES • BY AARON CROWELL



The horror genre is a vast medium by which scares are employed to elicit amusement. This form of entertainment dates back to the very first films ever made, albeit shorts in black and white with no sound, they allowed movie makers to help viewers escape the hum-drum of their everyday life and beguile them with images of terror and suspense. As cinema evolved, so did innovative filmmaking, giving way to special effects, sound and finally, color. Before long, directors began to realize that this new burgeoning art form could be used to alert the public of current events, influence people's emotions and teach important historical lessons. In the following article, I have chosen to recount one of the first horrible chapters of mankind's history which has been reenacted, reinvented and sadly, revisited far too many times since. We are going to journey back to a time when the Roman Catholic Church and civil authorities ruled the lands with iron fists and those whose ideas, lifestyles and beliefs did not conform to the Church were deemed heretics (those who do not conform to an established attitude, doctrine, or principle), while witch-hunters subjected the accused to sadistic tortments and slow suffering forms of execution. These were times when the innocent lived in a constant state of fear, paranoia and terror. During "The Burning Times" you or I, could be accused of witchcraft by nearly anyone, for nearly any reason, and nobody would dare stand up in our defense, as an accusation meant certain death and those who stood to oppose it were just as guilty (if not more). Heretics were typically given a chance to repent and submit to the Church, only after the discovery of their return to heresy were they then tortured and executed. Those persecuted for practicing witchcraft, however, were not as lucky. They weren't given a chance to recant, but rather forced to confess their absolute guilt under torture that carried a sentence of death by way of the gallows or burning. This travesty of justice has been well outlined thanks to directors, play writers and comic actors, all of whom helped make films that grimly reenact these eye opening historical events. You can be sure with every movie produced on this subject there is at least an ounce of truth, if not more. It is through the art of cinema that this visual admonition will not allow us to forget. I have cited several films and listed far more for those who seek this dark path to enlightenment. Not all the films listed are horror films, as this historical black mark spans nearly every genre of filmmaking with the fortitude to reveal the truth behind religious and legal corruption. For those of you with deep Roman Catholic religious beliefs, I seek not to discredit your ritual observance of faith, but rather to enlighten those who are not aware of past historical events as filmmakers have done for over a century. Most importantly, remember this did all happen, it is a fact. And keep in mind, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." ~ George Santayana

Since the beginning of time man has faced his greatest enemy: himself. The Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks and Romans all became masterful innovators of torture and death, if often only for the preservation of justice and negative reinforcement of community values, that even by today's cinematic excesses have yet to be fully demonstrated or equaled. As the rules that govern society have grown, so too has



man's appetite for destruction. Civilizations have risen and fallen, giving way to new and more diverse ways of thought and control. One thing that has both united and divided mankind since inception has been religion. "They say there's enough religion in the world to make men hate each other, but not enough to make them love" (Robert De Niro, Louis Cyphre in *Angel Heart*). More lives have been lost to opposing belief systems than any other single dilemma mankind has ever faced. It is truly ironic when you think it is what we believe will happen in our afterlife that determines how we live our everyday life. Vanity leads man to this strange place that only his belief system can truly rationalize.

There is no precise date recorded for the beginning of the Inquisition. Some sources say it was 1184, but most sources agree it manifested during the first six years of the reign of the Catholic Pope, Gregory IX, between 1227 and 1233. Pope Gregory IX, who ruled from 1227-1241, is often referred to as the "Father of the Inquisition."

The Inquisition, by definition, is an official investigation of both political and religious nature, characterized by lack of regard for individual rights, prejudice on the part of the examiners, and recklessly cruel punishments perpetrated by Xians (Christians). Over time the Catholic Church increased in power until it had total control over human life, both secular and religious. The Vatican and Pope Innocent III were not satisfied with the progress regional leaders had achieved in rooting out heresy as the pope commissioned his own Inquisitors who answered directly to him, thanks to civil authority bestowed upon the Church, made official in the Papal Bull of March 25th, 1199. Pope Innocent III declared, "anyone who attempted to construe a personal view of God which conflicted with the Church dogma must be burned without pity." This meant that even if you were a Christian, but your belief system was not in tune with the Church, such as the Albigenses, you would be exterminated. In 1257, Pope Innocent IV authorized and officially condoned torture as a method of extracting confessions of heresy. Confessions were forced by local executioners or torturers so as to keep the Inquisitor's hands clean as seen in virtually every film on this subject matter. This way confessions could be noted as being given without duress since rarely were they extracted in the actual court room of the hearing. Aristocrats and the wealthy often paid healthy bribes to avoid being prosecuted as nearly anyone from a Cardinal, tribal members to clergy could be arrested and charged as a witch or a heretic (as seen in the unambiguous Czech 1969 film *Witches' Hammer*). Personal property of the accused was confiscated by the Church since there was little to no chance of proving one's innocence. Property was supposedly sold to cover the court cost, but was most likely garnered by the church. Even the long deceased were accused by Inquisitors, their bones exhumed, tortured and sometimes even burned simply to allow the Church to confiscate all property of the living heirs, leaving them penniless (as seen in the opening moments of Stuart Gordon's understated 1991 remake of Edgar Allen Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum*). This film is vastly different from Roger Corman's Vincent Price classic, as it follows Tomás de Torquemada and his reign of terror. Torquemada was originally a Dominican monk who had become the confessor to Ferdinand II and Isabella I of Castile, leading to his position as first Inquisitor General of

## Timeline of Treachery

Here is a timeline of cinematic releases over the century that best exhibit the persecution of accused heretics, witches and venetians coupled with films that showcase the witch's curse, possession of monsters and vengeful spirits, including other genre films we had best capture the spirit of the article.



A woodcut depicting scenes of torture and execution.

**Spain 1420-1498** The Spanish Inquisition began in 1478 and ended in 1534 with many short and feature length films based on the subject produced centuries later, and still being made to this day.

The *Malleus Maleficarum*, *The Hammer of Witches*, was written in 1486 by two Dominican monks, Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, first published in Germany in 1487. The book was a de-facto ("concerning fact") handbook for witch-hunters and inquisitors throughout late Medieval Europe. Between the years 1487 and 1520 it was published 13 times, and between 1574 to 1669 it was again published 16 times. It is terrifying to think that by today's standards this book would be considered a best selling how-to book. All one had to do was procure this "witch-hunting for dummies" book and you could easily learn how to accuse, test and torture anyone on the offense of witchcraft, made widely available thanks to Johannes Gutenberg's invention the printing press in 1450, that allowed this book as well as others on the subject to spread so rapidly over Europe. The book can be seen in Paul Naschy's exceptional film *Inquisidor* released in 1976, packed with historical subtlety, and one of the few titles with self-commentary. Naschy's film paints a graphic yet realistic view of life during the Inquisition.

Another dark historical theme thought to be the work of witches that is also found throughout this subgenre of film is the emergence of the Black Death in Europe between 1348 and 1350; also known as the Black Plague, or the Bubonic Plague. A fabled plague called the Red Death was the main theme for the film *Masque of the Red Death*, based on but one of many Poe stories that inspired Roger Corman and star Vincent Price produced together in the '60s. It is believed that 30 to 60 percent of Europe's population died from the real plague that was spread widely by fleas (with the help of black rats). It is also of great importance to make mention of Joan of Arc, a patroness of soldiers and of France who was burned at the stake on May 30th, 1431 (when she was 19 years old) on charges of heresy. She was declared a saint in 1921 by the very church that placed her on trial. In 1899, the Godfather of Special Effects, Georges Méliès, paid tribute to this saint in his (10 min) French short film titled *Jeanne d'Arc*, marking the first cinematic burning at the stake exhibited on film.

The Knights Templar were officially endorsed by the Roman Catholic Church around 1129. Composed of the most skilled fighting units of the Crusades, the group became a favored charity throughout the holy lands. They were innovators of both early forms of banking and building impressive and sound fortifications across Europe. Templar Knights are dignified by a large red cross emblem. Originally the order was said to be composed of but nine knights who offered themselves to the Patriarch of Jerusalem to serve as a military force. After but two centuries, greed, rumored corruption and jealousy all led to accusations that destroyed the order. King Philip IV of France (Philip the Fair) accused the Knights Templar of sacrilege (spitting and trampling) of the cross, homosexuality and idolatry in an effort to rid the Templars of their power and wealth. Knights were arrested and tortured with some giving confessions of guilt under extreme agony to these allegations. In 1312 the Templars were officially dissolved by Pope Clement V at the Council of Vienna, under pressure from King Philip, but not found guilty of the charges. In 1314 Jacques de Molay (the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar) was burned at the stake for having recanted his earlier confessions of guilt. It is long rumored that de Molay cursed King Philip and Pope Clement to die the same year as he did (which, eerily, they did). The most important horror films based around the Knights Templar are the *Blind Dead* films written and directed by Amanda de Ossorno. These four films depict the curse of the Templars who's skeletal remains return from the grave to seek revenge on the living.

Hypocrisy is the best word to describe the events that unfolded between 1450 and 1750. This was the era of the witch hunt - a phenomenon that swept across the world like a fatally infectious disease. Thanks to widespread hysteria and false notions that dated back to the inquisition, the most intense hunts took place between 1620 and 1630 in Switzerland, Germany and eastern France. It lasted five centuries in Europe and even reared its ugly head in New England (North America) in 1692. It is now believed, based

**LEAVE THE CHILDREN HOME!  
...and if YOU are SQUEAMISH  
STAY HOME WITH THEM!!!!!!**



**THE CONQUEROR WORM**  
—COLOR—  
—MUSIC BY—  
—CASTING BY—  
—EDITING BY—  
—PRODUCTION DESIGNER—  
—EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS—  
—PRODUCED BY—  
—WRITTEN BY—  
—DIRECTED BY—

- 1939 *Joan of Arc* (short; Georges Méliès)
- 1903 *The Witch's Revenge* (short)
- 1905 *A Miracle Under the Inquisition* (short)
- 1919 *The Plague of France*
- 1922 *Hissan: Witchcraft Through the Ages* (silent)
- 1939 *Tower of London* (Boris Karloff)
- 1942 *I Married a Witch*
- 1945 *The Woman Who Came Back*
- 1957 *The Crucible* (Raymond Roussel)
- 1957 *The Last Witch*
- 1957 *Night of the Demon*
- 1960 *Black Sunday*
- 1961 *The Pit and the Pendulum* (Roger Corman)
- 1962 *The Brink*
- 1962 *The Witch's Mirror*
- 1963 *The Hounded Palace*
- 1964 *The Long Hair of Death*
- 1964 *Terror in the Crypt*
- 1964 *Witchcraft*
- 1965 *Bloody Pit of Horror*
- 1966 *The She Beast*
- 1967 *Castle of the Walking Dead*
- 1967 *The Crucible* (TV, Alex Segal)
- 1968 *Curse of the Crimson Altar*
- 1968 *The Witchfinder General*
- 1970 *Mark of the Devil*
- 1970 *Cry of the Banshee*
- 1970 *The Bloody Judge*
- 1970 *Witches' Hammer*
- 1971 *The Devils*
- 1971 *Night of Dark Shadows*
- 1971 *Tomb of the Blind Dead*
- 1972 *Daughters of Satan*
- 1972 *The Demons*
- 1972 *Don't Torture a Duckling*
- 1972 *The Monk*
- 1973 *The Nuns of Saint Archanhel*
- 1973 *Mark of the Devil 2*
- 1973 *The Reincarnation of Isobel*
- 1973 *Return of the Blind Dead*
- 1974 *Devil's Possessed*
- 1974 *The Antichrist*
- 1974 *Flavia the Heretic*
- 1974 *The Ghost Galleon*
- 1974 *The Sinful Nuns of Saint Valentine's*
- 1975 *The Inquisitor* (Bernardo Aries)
- 1975 *Sabbat's Pandemonium*
- 1975 *Night of the Seagulls*
- 1976 *Inquisition*
- 1976 *Satan's Slave*
- 1977 *Low Letters from a Portuguese Nun*
- 1978 *Turms*
- 1979 *Damned*
- 1981 *Burned at the Stake*
- 1983 *The Devil's Victim*
- 1985 *Three Sorcerers for Sarah* (TV)
- 1986 *The Name of the Rose*
- 1986 *Warlock*
- 1987 *Bay Cove*
- 1988 *Witchery*
- 1989 *Tarzan's Curse*
- 1990 *Carroll*
- 1990 *The Haunting of Morley*
- 1991 *The Pit and the Pendulum* (Stuart Gordon)
- 1996 *The Crucible*
- 1998 *Dangerous Beauty*
- 1998 *Elizabeth*
- 1999 *The Blair Witch Project*
- 1999 *Sleepy Hollow*
- 1999 *The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc*
- 2000 *Book of Shadows: Blair Witch 2*
- 2002 *Salem Witch Trials* (John Sargent)
- 2003 *Lucifer*
- 2005 *The Headman*
- 2005 *Casanova*
- 2006 *Day's Ghosts*
- 2007 *Bel Witch: The Movie*
- 2008 *Bel Witch*

# The Persecution of the Innocent



James I Stuart (1603-1625) with the height of these hunts taking place in England during the first European Civil War (1641-1651), when the government's power collapsed, as seen in the Michael Reeves enigmatic film *The Witchfinder General* (released in America as *The Conqueror Worm*). In this film, largely considered Vincent Price's best performance, he plays Matthew Hopkins a (real-life) self-proclaimed witch hunter general who gallivants across the war-torn countryside accusing innocent people of witchcraft while collecting a day's pay. Since England had abolished the use of torture in 1640, the real Hopkins primarily used the "swimming test," along with intimidation and sleep deprivation to coerce the accused to confess to being a witch as well as naming other accomplices. The swimming test involved the binding of one's hands and feet in a hog-tie position, often with toes tied to fingers. The accused is then cast into a body of water to see if they will float or sink, often being held underwater with long sticks. If they stay at the bottom, then God is with them and they are not a witch (although they die none the less) while if their body were to float, they were proven a witch and hung or possibly burned. In England, witches were more often hung than burned, with the burnings taking place most commonly in continental Europe. The death penalty was imposed on a wide variety of crimes in this era, but witchcraft in particular was punished by death on the basis of Exodus 22:18: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," and Leviticus 24:27: "A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones." Varying techniques were used to burn presumed witches and heretics over the centuries, tied to a stake was the most common as seen in *Black Sunday*, *The Messenger*, *Elvira: Mistress of the Dark*, and many more. However, it was not uncommon for an accused witch to be bound to a ladder, and with a scaffold, lowered into the flames as seen in films, such as *Mark of the Devil* and *Silent Hell* as well as (oddy enough) *The Witchfinder General* and *The Bloody Judge* (both British films). Burning people to death prevented the spilling of blood. John 15:6 says, "If a man abode not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." This Nazarene quote incited all of these burnings.

The varied techniques of torture to elicit a confession were just as vast as the reasons for the total necessity of witchcraft genocide. Witches were believed to have the power to cast spells and to corrupt society. Pope Innocent VIII in 1484 announced his reason behind the creation of the *Mallicus Maleficarum*, revealing that witches in Germany were meeting with demons, casting spells,

on factual documentation, that between 40,000 to 100,000 lives were lost during the "Burning Times," as this tragedy has become known. Due to inconsistencies and lost and unkept documentation, as well as still-emerging details, one will really never know all the facts. Still, theories continue to this day concerning what caused this hysterical epidemic, and more importantly, what ended it. It is important to point out that the Church was not solely in charge of the witch hunts, but did sanction them. Local witch hunters in England received licenses from laws passed by King

destroying crops, aborning and eating infants. The first religious mention of witches came in Exodus 22:18 (circa 560 B.C.): "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." The word witch is derived from the Hebrew word "kashaph," which comes from the root meaning "to whisper," or could be construed as to cast a spell. Later (circa 420), Saint Augustine of Hippo urged that only God alone could suspend the normal laws of the universe and that the idea of witches and Satan having this power was not a true threat, and spells or other attempts at mischief from pagans who believed this were ignored as the late medieval Church agreed and took no steps tracking down witches or investigating allegations of witchcraft. Views changed drastically in 1208 when Pope Innocent III began his attack on Cathar heretics who believed that a world exists in which a war between God and Satan was occurring, with both possessing supernatural powers. The Church discredited the Cathar's religious beliefs by spreading stories that these heretics actually worshipped Satan himself. Church propaganda (via wood cuts) depicted Cathars kissing Satan's ass in ceremonial displays of their loyalty to the dark one. As a result of this slander from the Church, public view of Satan transformed from folly to that of a powerful evil force. In 1273, a Dominican monk named Thomas Aquinas whose writings became adopted as the orthodoxy of the Church, spoke of a world filled with evil and dangerous demons who seek to reap the sperm of man to spread to women, as one of many reasons why 80 percent of those accused and executed for witchcraft were females. The monk's writings deemed that demons not only took zeal in their own matters, but also sought to lead men into temptation. This belief caused many men of the cloth to ascertain that the emergence of their own sexual repression was not a natural instinct but one fabricated by a beautiful woman who had, but simply, awoken this long dormant desire by bewitching them. It was also quite common for the afflicted to whip himself in private as a form of penance, or the wearing of a self-mortification belt (a spiked belt) for prolonged periods of suffering. This belief is explored in Naschy's *Inquisition*, Gordon's *Pit* and the Pendulum remake, as well as from the opposite sexual disposition of the nuns seen in Ken Russell's masterpiece *The Devils*, easily the best example of this theory and possibly the first found in cinema. Jess Franco, among other directors, helped create an entire subgenre of erotic-themed films exploiting the subject matter of religious female sexual repression set free which has become known as "Nursploitation." The best examples being *The Devils*, *Love Letters from a Portuguese Nun*, *The Sinful Nuns of Saint Valentine* and *Flavia the Heretic*. The contention being women are weaker and that is why the devil picks them. The sexual connection between the persecution of the innocent and their accusers is quite obvious since it is rooted in the fact that 100 percent of the Inquisitors, torturers, executioners, witch hunters and magistrates were all of the male persuasion. This fact, mixed with sexual repression and misogyny



Warner Bros. announced *The Devils* for DVD release in 2008, however it was cancelled for unknown reasons.

**The Devils is not a film for everyone**

It is a true story carefully documented. Historically accurate - a witness who is a disbeliever. His mother, Anselmo is likely to be killed as a masterpiece by many. But he was a religious and highly graphic in describing the horror events that occurred in France in 1634 when the Inquisition was checking and deeply disturbing.

We need a responsibility to show you this. We are sure that only the audience will appreciate **THE DEVILS** will come to us.

**VANESSA REDGRAVE - OLIVER REED**  
IN **KEN RUSSELL'S FILM OF**  
**THE DEVILS**

A Warner Bros. Film. Released by Warner Bros. Pictures. A Warner Bros. Production. A Warner Bros. Picture.



impulses exercised against the fairer sex, is more than enough evidence to condemn those involved. More evidence of alternate motives was revealed in the first witch test to be administered by the court as prescribed in the *Maleus Maleficarum*, allowing the accused to be stripped of all clothing before the tribunal so that the body could be inspected for the mark of the devil, which when discovered, was nothing more than a mole, boil or birthmark. Shaving off all the hair on the body to leave no hiding place for the mark was also common practice. Not to say that the witch hunts were strictly a persecution of women exclusively, but considering most accused women often had little to no monetary value or property to be taken from them, what other *modus operandi* can be cited? "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men." ~ Lord Acton

The devices employed to bring forth confessions have a long invidious his-

tory (often on a broom stick) to a secret rendezvous with demons, witches, and Lucifer himself, where they indulged in dancing, feasting and all forms of debauchery. Acquaintances, friends and even family members were given up under such intense anguish. So too were the outrageous details that outlined the witch-finder's hand books filled with facts purged from the lips of the accused witches while enduring extreme torture, fueling this scandalous charade for centuries to come.

The witch hysteria spread to Salem, Massachusetts in the 17th century in March of 1692, lasting less than a year. By summer, over 150 residents of Salem were formally charged and imprisoned - defenseless against accusations of the capital felony of witchcraft in a society controlled by superstition and fear as hysterical young girls called out the names of the accused. The courts were swift and final with their judgment. Bridget Bishop, the first to be hanged on June 10th, set the precedent for a summer of executions. Giles Corey, an 80-year-old farmer, was subjected to *Paine forte et dure* (punishment by heavy rock crushing) and died while being questioned by the court. The youngest to be accused was Dorcas Good who was only five years old. A combination of social unrest led to hysteria in Salem, superstition, petty squabbling, jealousy, politics and possible ergot poisoning. In the end, 19 of the accused were hung, 14 women and five men, and at least five more died in jail. These were the last executions in American history for the crime of witchcraft, as jurors and most magistrates later apologized, restitution was made to the victims' families and a Day of Fasting and Remembrance was instituted. The people of Salem today have adapted a phrase "We won't forget. We can't forget." Playwright Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible* in the 1950s based on events that led to the Salem witch trials. His play was a response to McCarthyism (any attempt to restrict political



Torture devices, as seen in *Heaven*.

of their own. While there is not nearly enough space to list all these instruments and their intended applications, it should too be stated that those who devised these procurements must have been as evil as those who implemented their use. The Rack was easily the most common form of torture and had several different designs, from a large wooden wheel to a tilted ladder, with the most common being a simple table with a pair of shackles and a wooden wheel (at the base or top) fitted with ropes used to stretch the victim till he or she conceded (or their limbs separate from their sockets). This device was simple, very effective and age old. The Rack can be seen in nearly every period film on this subject in one of its many varying designs, sometimes fitted with spiked wheels that rest under the victim's back or with open grates allowing fire to be added. Metal tools such as pincers were often heated in fires, and then used to rip nipples and chunks of skin from the accused with branding irons heated and pressed on sensitive parts of the body for added effect (as seen in *Mark of the Devil*). Through trial and error it was discovered that a person's flesh could be flayed from their body all the way down to the waist before they would die... yes, that means the head and face first. Some of the more simplistically-designed tortures carried forth the most painful results, such as forcing one to swallow a knotted cloth, then having it retracted slowly to displace the intestines (causing excruciating abdominal pain, sure to bring forth a confession). Other popular techniques and tools included breaking with the Wheel, the Thumbscrew, the (spiked) Interrogation Chair and slow disembowelment (as seen in the final moments of *Braveheart*). It is easy to see how forced confessions, under the duress of these devious devices, could easily bring forth the desired statement of guilt. Sadly, the confession was not enough as those put to the question often were forced to give names of accomplices and those they saw at a sabbat or black mass. These were meetings that were said to occur when a witch's naked body was rubbed down with magic ointment allowing her

criticism or individual dissent by claiming it to be unpatriotic or pro-Communist), in that he himself was called on by the House of Representatives' Committee on Un-American Activities in 1956 and was convicted of "contempt of Congress," much like his character John Proctor, failing to identify others present at meetings he had attended. Miller's play first opened in Martin Beck Theater on Broadway on January 22nd, 1953. The production won the 1953 "Best Play" Tony Award. A French/Eastern German film version was released in 1957 titled *Les sorcières de Salem*. Then the first TV movie came in 1967, directed by Alex Segal and starring George C. Scott as John Proctor. In 1996, Miller wrote the screenplay for *The Crucible*, a feature film brilliantly directed by Nicholas Hytner and starring Daniel Day-Lewis as John Proctor, Winona Ryder (Abigail Williams) and Paul Scofield (Judge Thomas Danforth). The open casting call for this film was held at the abandoned Danvers State Mental Hospital in Danvers, Massachusetts, where the horror film *Session 9* was shot. The auditions were held in the auditorium of the abandoned hospital which is prominent-



A scene from *Bloody Hell* of Hester.



# The Persecution of the Innocent

## Icons of True Evil

Actor: Vincent Price

Role: Matthew Hopkins (The Witchfinder General, aka The Conqueror Worm, 1968)

The real Matthew Hopkins was born in 1620. After serving a period of time as a shipping and a lawyer's clerk he made a name for himself in 1644 (at the age of 24), when he began traveling the eastern counties of England (Suffolk, Essex, Norfolk), officially claiming to be commissioned by Parliament to hunt down and prosecute witches to the full extent of the law. Just one year prior in 1643, the English Civil War had broken out and turned the country upside down, allowing for a scandalous man such as this to take full advantage of the situation. Hopkins often did not use conventional torture methods to draw confessions from victims; instead, torture was followed in England at the time, but rather used sleep deprivation and brooding techniques. He also used several device tests such as the needle prick or "witch probes" and the "swimming test" to reveal a witch's guilt. Much like a bandit the "Witch-Finder General" rode across the countryside collecting pay while committing acts of rape, torture and murder with the assistance of his real life companions John Stearne and Mary Phillips who themselves earned £1 per witch. It is widely believed that Hopkins died from consumption (tuberculosis) in his home in 1647 at the young age of 27, putting an end to and his tactical reign of terror. Before his death Hopkins did author a pamphlet "The Discovery of Witches" to silence his skeptics.

Actor: Christopher Lee

Role: Judge George Jeffreys (The Bloody Judge, 1970)

Born in Acton Park in 1645, Jeffreys was the sixth son of John Jeffreys and Margaret Inland. His family has always held high legal position throughout history. After a fruitful legal career in 1683 he earned the position of Lord Chief Justice later followed by Lord Chancellor, that elevated him to the post as Baron Jeffreys of Wren. Presiding over the "Bloody Assizes" in the fall of 1685, Jeffreys sentenced nearly 200 people to the gallows (the Duke of Monmouth's followers) after Monmouth's Rebellion, with 800 more shipped off to the West Indies as indentured laborers. He then became known as the "The Hanging Judge." His reputation was that of a bitter, draconian judge who was said to suffer from a painful kidney disease that affected his unbridled temperament. Jeffreys attended many of the hangings in person as well as kept a strict watch from the Prospect of Whitby public house of Wapping in London where he could view public executions (being performed after the rise on "Execution Dock" while dining and drinking. In it was Jeffreys' stern and unsympathetic approach to legal proceedings that became a template for judges and magistrates that followed in his wake. The hanging Judge finally died (at the age of 44) of kidney disease in 1689 while taking refuge for his own safety in the Tower of London after James II fled the country. His ghost is widely believed to still haunt several places in London to this very day.

Actor: Lancelotti

Role: Tomás de Torquemada (Stuart, Gordon, The Pit and the Pendulum, 1991)

Tomás de Torquemada, a Spanish Dominican monk, was born in 1420 in Albalade, Castile, Leon, Spain. Torquemada was known above all things as the first Inquisitor General of Spain (appointed in 1482) during the 15th century. This man was the defender of the church, in full charge of seeking out converso heretics, often Jews who had professed to Catholics but secretly continued to practice their Jewish religion, and any other "enemies" of the Church. Torquemada was instrumental in finally bringing about the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 from Spain. He was known as the "The Hammer of Heretics, The Light of Spain, the Saviour of his Country, the Honour of his Order and the The Black Legend." Torquemada gave rise to the term auto-da-fé, that is defined as the public declaration of the judgment passed on persons tried in the courts of the Spanish Inquisition, followed by the execution by the civil authorities of the sentences imposed, especially the burning of condemned heretics at the stake. Burnings were not the only sentences carried out since he was a stern supporter of the use of torture, as many Spaniards endured fates worse than death. Torquemada was so feared that he had to travel with upwards of 50 mounted guards and 250 armed men to serve as his personal bodyguards. After serving 15 years as Spain's Grand Inquisitor, in 1496 he died in Avila, Spain peacefully. In 1832 Torquemada's tomb was rediscovered, and his bones stolen and buried.



"hewen," meaning witches) opened in Sweden in

1922, then came under fire for its graphic imagery and outward attack on the church, becoming officially banned outside of Sweden for decades. It can now be seen in both versions thanks to its fully restored and re-titled Criterion Collection DVD release. Witches have found a safe haven for decades now on television with past and present hit series Bewitched, The Worst Witch, Babtha, Passions, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Charmed and Sabrina the Teenage Witch. While the Inquisition has been mocked in comedy sketches found in Monty Python's Flying Circus, Series 2 "The Spanish Inquisition," which gave rise to the principal catch phrase: "Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!" as well as Mel Brook's History of the World Part 4 "The Inquisition." Not to say the witch trials escaped mockery, as seen in the segment "She's a Witch" from Monty Python's The Holy Grail, where an accused is put to a fun spin on the swimming test... "If she weighs the same as a duck, she's made of wood (and therefore) a witch!" ... a joke that would even make the evil Witchfinder General, Matthew Hopkins snicker. Even dramatic films such as Goya's Ghost (2006), involving painter Francisco Goya (Stellan Skarsgård [father Merrin in both Exorcist prequels]), who is forced to deal with the Spanish Inquisition when his muse, Ines (Natalie Portman), is arrested by the Church for heresy, or Luther (2003), a biographical/historical drama which follows a German monk named Martin Luther who challenged the corruption in the Roman Catholic Church and helped usher in the Reformation in 1517, the 16th century religious movement that led to the establishment of the Protestant Church. Sadly, the Protestants too persecuted and burned witches for years to come. Mano Bava's gory gothic masterpiece, Black Sunday, which starred Barbara Steele as a vampress and witch who is executed by her brother when a spiked mask is hammered onto her face before being buried at the stake (only to return 200 years later to feed on her descendants). Bava's film was a world-wide critical and box office success, launching both his and Steele's careers. The film also marked the beginning of a long line of creepy gothic vampire and witch revenge films that used vengeance from beyond the grave, curses and even possession of one's future relatives in modern times to tell a similarly-styled story. These fright flicks also often starred Barbara Steele in the role she was best known for, playing an ancient vengeful witch or vampress. A few titles influenced by Black Sunday include: The Brainiac, The Long Hair of Death, The Haunted Palace, Terror in the Crypt, Bloody Pit of Horror, Witchcraft, The She Beast, The Antichrist, Terror, The Deviousness Terror, Witchery, The Haunting of Morella and The Blair Witch Project.

ly featured in Session 9.

The after effects of the Inquisition and the witch hunts will forever haunt cinema. The first film pioneer to really expose these historical facts was a Danish filmmaker by the name of Benjamin Christensen whose silent film Håkon: Witchcraft Through the Ages was released 1922. Håkon is documentary about the history of witchcraft complete with dramatized events some factual and some giving credence to what the accusers believed to be fact at the time with Christensen even appearing in the film as the folk longed devil himself. The film was again released in 1960 with narration by Best generation writer and hipster icon William S. Burroughs, best known for his book The Naked Lunch. Håkon (pronounced

Director of Håkon, Benjamin Christensen, as the Devil.



# THE BLAIR WITCH

## 10 YEARS AFTER THE "PROJECT"

by Eric Newell

At the time it didn't seem to make sense. Much like the lost students in their film, Dan Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez had virtually disappeared from the public eye for over six years after the release of *The Blair Witch Project*. Had they become victims, too? Or was the pressure of following up the highest grossing independent film of all time, one that supplanted the horror classic *Halloween* to obtain that title, proving to be too much? To understand how the directors of what was once the hottest property in Hollywood could nearly vanish from the face of the earth a little over one year later, is to understand the story of *The Blair Witch Project*. A little movie that became so big, so fast, that it sucked up all those involved like an unstoppable twister and violently spit them out, sending everyone in divergent directions. It's hard to believe it started out this simply, but the entire history of the film goes back to one sentence ... "Let's do that woods movie."

It was spoken in a conversation between Dan Myrick and his friend and collaborator, Ed Sanchez. The two had met years earlier in film school in the early '90s, while attending the University of Central Florida in Orlando. While bonding over their mutual love of horror films, Myrick and Sanchez discovered that they shared an interest in one particular subgenre, the grainy, documentary-style films and television specials from the '70s. It was over talk of things such as "In Search of" with Leonard Nimoy, or the fuzzy "Patterson" Bigfoot footage, that the idea for *The Blair Witch Project* was born.

The initial concept was simple. A film crew gets lost in the woods, and their footage is found some time later. At the start, their idea was to have the film be shot and edited like an actual documentary, showing the student's footage, but also cutting back and forth between other interviews and expert analyses. With inspiration but no money to do anything about it, Ed and Dan put the project on the backburner.

After graduation, Ed moved back to Maryland. Dan stayed in Orlando where the two had gone to school, and began working in the production industry. While there Dan formed a relationship with producer Gregg Hiale, who liked the project so much he put up enough money for Dan to rent a production office and shoot what he describes as an "investor reel." It was a short proof of concept video, shot with different actors than the ones who appeared in the finished film, showing off the basic idea of what they were trying to do. Now that they had a bare-bones version of their idea on tape, it was time to create interest in the film. What happened next is hard to dismiss as anything but pure fate.

Dan had heard that John Pierson, a long time independent film guru with his own show on the fledgling cable network Bravo called *SpitScreen*, was going to be in town shooting a segment and needed a local camera crew. Dan ended up with the job through a recommendation from a friend, and over the course of the shoot



became friends with John. Myrick sent him the investor reel once Pierson had returned back to New York, and almost immediately received a call back, "asking if it was real."

### THE LEGEND SPREADS

Pierson, who had long been entrenched in New York City's independent film scene, was enthralled by the footage from the very start. He wanted to air it during the last segment of the first season of his show, as a cliffhanger, and then provide the money for a second segment to premiere the next season. This would give Dan and Ed a little capital to move things to the next level, and hopefully gain some national exposure in the process. In a world where funding independent films can seem nearly impossible, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity.

The "cliffhanger" aired in the fall of 1997. After the initial airings, the message boards over at *SpitScreen*'s official Web site blew up with people wanting to know more about the missing students. The footage had been presented as "real," and the strategy instantly worked, stoking rumors and urban legends about the students who had gone missing in Burkittsville.

Ed, who had some experience in web design and had now joined Dan and Greg in Orlando, started working on a Web site of their own. It turned out to be a voluminous destination packed with history, a fleshed out mythos, and a message board area where fans and curious onlookers could gather to debate the growing legend. With an assist from John Pierson, the group was able to deflect the discussion on John's site over to their own, and things began to snowball from there.

At this point Pierson had put up about \$10,000 of his own money to help fund the project, with the expectation that some of the footage from the feature shoot would be used for a segment on his season opener the following April. The rest of the funding was secured on the back of that boost, and now that they had raised about \$22,000, it was time for Dan, Ed and Gregg to put their money where their mouths were. First, they had to find their actors ... or perhaps more accurately, their "victims."



### FINDING THE FACES

The casting process was particularly important to *The Blair Witch Project* because of the extremely experimental nature of the film. All of the "found" footage was to be shot by the actors themselves, so they needed not only talented thespians, but ones who could work with cameras and sound equipment, or were at least willing to learn.

The one actor who was all but cast before auditions started was Josh Leonard. Leonard had learned about the project about a year earlier while living in New York and working for a documentary

## MISSING



The missing poster for the Blair Witch Project. It features three people in a dark, wooded setting, with the title 'MISSING' at the top.

It was a dark, rainy night in 1997 when three students from the University of Maryland disappeared in the woods near Burkittsville, Maryland. The Blair Witch Project was born.

The Blair Witch Project was a groundbreaking independent film that revolutionized the horror genre. It was a dark, rainy night in 1997 when three students from the University of Maryland disappeared in the woods near Burkittsville, Maryland. The Blair Witch Project was born.

## THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT

production company. After seeing a listing and getting in contact with Ed, the two remained in sporadic touch. The casting notice that went out made no bones about what potential actors were getting into. As Heather Donahue recalled during an interview on *The Late Late Show* with Craig Kilborn in 1999, the notice said something to the effect of "Completely improvised feature film, shot in a wooded location, shooting is going to suck as much as you can possibly imagine."

Surprisingly, after reading that notice over 2,000 people came out to audition for the roles of the remaining two campers. Josh was tasked with reading opposite many of the hopefuls.

When Heather entered the room, Dan Myrick walked up to her and said, "You've served seven years of a nine year sentence, why should we let you out on parole?" Her impromptu performance won her the role of the director, who would eventually come to be named after her.

The cast was rounded out with a young, trained actor from New York City named Mike C. Williams, who was fresh out of college and looking for his first movie role. Williams, whose background was strong in improv, was excited about the opportunity to work on such an experimental film. When we spoke with him recently, he recalled becoming fast friends with Leonard. He believes it was that chemistry that ultimately won him the role, as several other actors were also being considered when the final decision was made.

### INTO THE WOODS

The Blair Witch Project was shot over the course of eight days in October of 1997. The scenes in the woods that now make up the majority of the feature film were shot in Seneca Creek State Park in Maryland, with much of the interviews and documentary footage being shot in the real life, nearby town of Burkittsville.

Contrary to popular belief, the trio of actors were not simply "sent out into the woods" without direction or any idea of what was happening. The system for directing the actors was actually fairly intricate. They were equipped with a Global Positioning System (GPS), and each day were given a set of coordinates. In addition, each was given a small film canister with their name on it, with character directions for that day that were to be kept to themselves. The actors hiked long distances each day, and then camped at night.

During the daytime, Dan, Ed, production designer Ben Rock and/or producer Gregg Hale would stalk the actors using techniques that Hale had learned from his military training, and watch them from a distance using binoculars. In doing so they could make sure that things were going smoothly, and that the

group was moving in the right direction. All of the actors involved stated that they remained in character the vast majority of the time, and only occasionally would the producers make themselves known as to assure the actors filming was going as planned. For safety reasons, and given the intensely emotional nature of the acting, the group came up with their own "safety words" in case things got too intense.

Nightfall is when all bets were off, as the group of filmmakers would ascend on the actors while they slept and begin their harassment. This included stalking, pre-recorded noises, and at certain points physically messing with their tent and their belongings. It's a common misconception that at these points in the film what you're seeing on-screen is not acting, but rather genuine reactions to the frightening things that were happening around them.

The truth is that what you see on-screen is actually far from genuine, which is what makes it all the more impressive from an acting standpoint. Picture yourself hiking for days with limited food, wet camping gear, under intense improvisational conditions on a film that you're making barely any money from. After three or four sleepless nights, you awake to the sound of babies crying, then your tent being violently shaken from the outside. As Josh Leonard told us, being "scared" was about the farthest thing from his mind. "There were moments on the shoot where I think we genuinely got freaked out," Josh said, "but what was actually going through my head during those night scenes... I was personally much more exasperated than I was actually scared. I was just like, 'Jesus Christ, man, let me sleep!'"

Unlike most narratively traditional films, the conditions and setup required that the picture be shot in chronological order. This led up to the penultimate final scene at the house in the woods, which turned out to be the one major exception to the hands-off policy. Due to some technical issues with sound on the first pass, the final scene was actually shot over multiple nights, and required a little more direction from Ed and Dan in order for everything to appear seamless in the final cut. Once that was finished, the real story had just begun.

CHANGING COURSE

After the eight grueling days were over, shooting wrapped and the arduous task of editing the material began. In all, Ed and Dan had over 19 hours of usable footage at their disposal. At this point they were still operating under the original plan, which was to have the film play out like an actual, produced documentary. The additional documentary footage they had planned for the film was shot later in '98, after the actors had emerged from the woods. At a certain point in the editing process, the decision was made to jettison the interviews and



It was a dark, rainy night in 1997 when three students from the University of Maryland disappeared in the woods near Burkittsville, Maryland. The Blair Witch Project was born.

## THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### Heather Donahue:

Heather has continued to pursue acting, mostly in television. Recent roles include the Sci-Fi original *Mindcore* and 2008's *The Morgue*. In recent years, Heather has sought to distance herself from anything Blair Witch related.



### Joshua Leonard:

Josh has remained active as an actor in both independent film and television. He recently made the jump to directing, and is currently helming a drama titled *Everything's Alright*.



### Mike C. Williams:

Mike took a three year hiatus from acting, but returned to positive reviews in Sanchez's film *Aftered*. He has also worked for Myrick, co-starring in his film *The Objective*. Mike has started his own Website [www.dearmarieberg.com](http://www.dearmarieberg.com).



documentary footage, and have the feature consist mainly of the "found" footage the actors had shot.

They kept their promise to John Pierson by producing a segment for the second season premiere of *SplitScreen*. The piece, now featuring a new cast and changed characters, aired on Bravo in early April of '98. The discrepancies in cast seemed to matter little to fans, who were so enthralled with the plight of the students at this point it was almost a lost cause to try and tell them it was all fake. All during the post-production process, the underground, Internet-fueled hype had continued to grow. "We were meeting people from all over the world who were loving this idea," Ed said, "and they were hungry for any kind of footage."

Throughout the summer and fall of '98 the picture played at a handful of smaller film festivals across the country. Those successes eventually led to their acceptance into 1999's Sundance Film Festival, in Park City, Utah. In the early morning hours of January 22nd, 1999, *The Blair Witch Project* became the first film to be picked up from that year's Sundance, when a young company called Artisan snatched up the rights for reportedly between \$1 and \$1.5 million. For Myrick and Sanchez, this was the beginning of a surreal, larger-than-life American dream, and eventual crash, that most people will never understand.

The next six to seven months before the film was released in theaters became a blur for the duo. They appeared on magazine covers, talk-shows, and even went on to the Cannes Film Festival in France, perhaps the most prestigious place on earth a filmmaker can have their work shown. On July 16th, 1999, Artisan floated the film out in a limited release. Reports quickly came in of lines around the block and sold-out theaters everywhere it was playing. Two weeks later, on July 30th, the film went wide across the country.

America had a severe case of "Blair Witch" fever. Despite Artisan's backpedaling on the "true story" angle as the release approached, large num-

bers of moviegoers were still confused as to what was reality and what wasn't. This created a fog of mystery and intrigue around the film, which only helped catapult its numbers even higher. In its opening weekend the film took in almost \$30 million. It then went on to make nearly the same the next weekend, a feat almost unheard of with wide theatrical releases. When it was all said and done, the film grossed over \$140 million in the United States alone. The worldwide total (including the US numbers), was somewhere in the neighborhood of \$248 million.

## JUMPING THE GUN

What happened next is the kind of story that makes horror fans cringe. Emboldened by the film's success, and finding themselves as owners of the hottest property in Hollywood, Artisan decided the best course of action was to strike while the iron was hot. Dan and Ed disagreed, as even then, in August, they were beginning to see the backlash. Parodies had popped up almost immediately. It was impossible to turn your television on without seeing someone mocking Heather Donahue's heartfelt apology to the camera. People were sick of hearing about *The Blair Witch*, and the creators knew that. They also had projects of their own they wanted to pursue with their new found cache, and they both thought the best plan would be to wait a few years and let the hype die down. Even then, they were less interested in a sequel than they were a period-piece prequel, set in winter, telling the story of Elly Kedward, the "Blair Witch" herself.

Artisan held their reasons for disagreeing. "They were moat to make money from day one," Ed told us. "That wasn't a secret." And although he's quick to add that there were plenty of artistic-minded, film friendly people who worked there, those who ran the ship had but one thing in mind... build the company up into something worth selling. Their plan was to go public with an IPO (Initial Public Offering), and they looked at a *Blair Witch* sequel as having the potential to provide them that final boost they needed to lure investors.

The contract they had signed with the filmmakers in Sundance gave them the right to do what they wished with the franchise once Ed and Dan refused the



sequel, and so they immediately commissioned scripts to be written. By November, their pockets flush with cash, Arisan had three scripts ready to go. In early November they called in New York based filmmaker Joe Berlinger to their offices to talk. Director of the award winning documentary *Paradise Lost*.

He was there to pitch his own project, one that Arisan had led him to believe they were interested in. Once in the meeting, they sprung the news that they wanted him for the Blair Witch sequel. Joe recently spoke to Joe, who due to bad blood over the way things eventually played out, hasn't spoken officially about the film in years. By his own admission, he was probably the last person on Earth who should have been directing a sequel to *The Blair Witch Project*.

On the first film, he had this to say: "I thought it was very cool and very effective, but as a documentarian who has made some beautifully crafted documentaries, I found the idea a little offensive that viewers were somehow equating 'reality' with shaky cam because most real documentarians leave that stuff on the editing room floor."

That wasn't the only issue Berlinger had with the concept. Morally, the marketing of the first film raised some red flags for him. "I've been troubled over the years by the ever increasing blurring of the line between fiction and reality," he told us. "As news divisions have become more entertainment oriented, as documentarians take more and more liberties with the truth, this is an issue that philosophically has always confronted me, always bothered me. [It's] something we should all be concerned with as a society because if you don't know the difference, terrible things can happen."

Even given his reservations, Arisan was adamant about convincing Joe to take on the project. He agreed to pen the scripts that had already been written, admitting to us that having his ego stroked by Arisan was keeping him from turning the project down altogether. Ultimately he decided none of them were worthy, as they all stuck with the hand-held, "found" footage conceit that he felt was flawed in the first place. By that point, as he put it, "the cat was out of the bag" as far as the ruse was concerned. To his shock and amazement, his rejections were only met with more overtures, and Arisan asked him to pitch his own ideas.

Joe came back with his own take on the material. "Don't sequelize the movie," he told us, "but make a sequel to the phenomenon of last summer's box office bonanza. My idea was to make fun of the idea of doing a sequel by doing a satire about competing Blair Witch tour groups, who still, despite the outing of the secret, still believe that the Blair Witch is real." He planned to, through the film, explore his reservations about the blurring of the thin line he mentioned earlier. "In the middle of it, a murder takes place, and by the end of the movie we realize that it's not the Witch. These guys have become so obsessed and fanatical, that they can no longer distinguish between fiction and reality."

Arisan bit on the pitch, although to Joe's surprise, they had no plans of balking on their shooting schedule. They were bearing full steam ahead towards their release date, already selected despite not having a movie to release, of October 27th, 2000. Always up for a good challenge, Berlinger agreed to do the film on Arisan's terms, and the result was a whirlwind script-writing session that Joe admits was still happening after shooting had started. "That's something I will take responsibility for," he said, "because I made the stupid decision to agree to that kind of schedule."

When you're aware of how everything played out in the end, it comes as a surprise that shoot-



A VHS 2-pack featuring BWP and Curse of the Blair Witch.

ing the film was actually a smooth process, even enjoyable for Berlinger and crew. Working with a young, relatively unknown cast that was found in less than six weeks (including Jeffrey Donovan and Erica Leermans, now a genre vet), Joe shot the film mostly on his own terms, with limited interference from Arisan.

He finished the film both on time and on budget. He turned in his first rough cut, worked with the notes he was given and was on his way to looking the picture when the studio finally dropped the hammer. What happened next, again, is the stuff that horror fan's nightmares are made of. A new marketing director, brought in to ensure the film's success after the stock bubble of the 1990s finally crashed in late 2000 (endangering their IPO), had convinced the higher-ups that what they needed was a "teen slasher movie." "Those were the exact words used," Joe told us. "Here I had delivered an edgy, adult satire, and they're telling me it needs to appeal to teenagers."

Joe spent the next week and a half "in hell," but after talking to his manager and lawyers, decided to stick it out through the reshoots and try to salvage as much of his original vision as he could. The reshoots consisted mostly of a gory recreation of the murders of the competing tour group, scenes which were completely absent from Berlinger's original picture. Joe told us that these scenes make him "sick to [his] stomach," and completely violate the whole idea of the original film. "The whole reason that the movie succeeded is that the violence and the horror happened off-screen," he says, "and by being so literal you're destroying what was the greatest hallmark of the franchise." Berlinger trudged on through the reshoots, with Arisan exerts now standing sentry through the entire process. He readily admits that his work on the scenes was "sloppy," chalking it up to an understandable lack of enthusiasm about the material.

The biggest difference between Berlinger's "Director's Cut," which he still has a copy of on VHS, and the version that fans ultimately saw in theaters has to do with the big reveal at the end. In the theatrical version, interrogation scenes are sprinkled throughout the entire picture, tipping the audience off to the fact that our protagonists are being accused of something awful. In Joe's version these scenes are in one eight minute block at the end, amounting to a big "Wist" reveal, where, after rooting for the main characters for 90 minutes, you finally discover that they've done something awful, and that it has nothing to do with any sort of witch. This change comes on top of the added gore scenes mentioned earlier, as well as all of the scenes in the Sanitarium, which were another addition demanded by producers. As was the case with the reshoots, Arisan's people stood watch over the additional editing sessions, ensuring they received the movie they thought they wanted.

## BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR

In hindsight, it's hard to say that if Berlinger's original vision for *Book of Shadows* had made it into theaters that the reaction would have been any different. In the end, it seemed that Myrick and Sanchez's reservations about the





public needing a break from all things Blair Witch turned out to be true. Add that to the creaky corporate nature making a sequel and Berlinger's decision to abandon the "found" footage conceit altogether, and it's hard to imagine any other outcome.

On October 27th, 2000, the R-rated *Blair Witch 2: Book of Shadows* debuted on over 3,000 screens in six countries. Since the film was considered a flop by horror fans and the mainstream alike, the raw numbers are surprising. On a budget of around \$15 million, the film actually grossed over \$47 million worldwide. On a pure numbers basis it was a success, and to this day, the highest grossing film Berlinger has ever worked on.

Looking back, what really characterizes *Book of Shadows* as a failure are the reviews. The reaction in the online world, a world that the original Blair Witch had helped come into its own as a medium for film discussion, was especially harsh. So harsh in fact that it caught Berlinger off guard. "What I underestimated going into the project, was the amount of venom towards anything called Blair Witch 2, regardless of what the movie was," he told us. "The level of vitriol that was released was at such a high level... I think any film called Blair Witch 2 was going to be attacked because of the whole idea of taking an indie phenomenon and trying to commercialize it."

More importantly for Artisan, the backlash and critical drubbing that the sequel took meant that their plans for a huge sell-off had gone down the drain. The film had made money, but the whole idea of selling the company relied on future earning potential, which had now evaporated due to the total evaporation of any kind of Blair Witch franchise. Artisan was acquired by Lionsgate in 2003

for an estimated \$160 million, and while they did own other lucrative properties, one has to wonder if the price tag would have been higher if the sequel had been a success. One thing is for sure... the press release announcing the deal makes no mention of *Book of Shadows*, a telling fact in itself.

## LEGAL TROUBLES

Both the filmmakers and principal actors were embroiled in legal battles with Artisan at one point

## "BLAIR WITCH STYLE"

### CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST (1980)

The similarities between "Blair Witch" and Ruggero Deodato's infamously banned jungle cannibal film are undeniable. If Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez had stuck with their original plan of insidious analysis and interviews, the comparisons would be even more compelling. Although acknowledging the similarities, both Ed and Dan insist they had never seen *Cannibal Holocaust* until after they made Blair Witch. Ed is willing to go one step further. "Honestly, I think that if Dan and I had heard of that movie before, we might have not shot Blair Witch."

### THE LAST BROADCAST (1997)

This indie film, released in 1997 uses a similar "found footage" structure, and centers around a pair of public access hosts mysteriously murdered in the woods. The directors, Stefan Avalos and Lance Weiler, make no bones about accusing Myrick and Sanchez of ripping off their concept, right down to the promotion Artisan used to sell the film. Upon Blair Witch's release in 1999, several major media outlets picked up the story, and for a while, it was big news. Myrick and Sanchez have always maintained that by the time they had first heard of *The Last Broadcast*, they had already been developing Blair Witch for years.

After the release of the original film, Myrick and Sanchez filed suit against Artisan for profits they were owed pertaining to the video release, eventually settling out of court for a reported \$25 to \$30 million. The following year, when *Book of Shadows* was being readied for release, Michael, Heather and Josh filed an injunction against Artisan trying to stop the release of the film. They claimed that their likenesses were used in the marketing, as well as the film itself (footage from the first film appears for a few seconds in the opening) and that they were owed compensation for this. Artisan claimed that the contract they signed after Sundance gave them rights to the trio's names and likenesses for any future promotion, and that the three novice actors were simply naive of the way that film contracts work. The suit was eventually settled with the actors receiving compensation from Artisan of an amount reportedly between \$3 and \$4 million each.

## TOYING WITH THE BLAIR WITCH:

At the 1999 San Diego Comic-Con, The Blair Witch phenomenon was in full-swing, just one week after the film's release. Thousands of eager fans lined up to meet Heather, Mike and Josh - to sign posters (dozens of which had penetrated theaters over the many months leading up to the film's release). It was one of the most impressive celebrity signings for its time - and may have actually been the first theatrically released film to take over Comic-Con, resulting in the Hollywood-centric event that exists today!

Many still wondered, months later, if the events of *The Blair Witch Project*



### CLOVERFIELD (2008)

If you followed the press leading up to J.J. Abrams' hand-held monster flick, you can see how much the "Blair Witch style" has become part of the lexicon. Anything shot with a first-person "shaky cam" is now referred to as a "Blair Witch type film." In fact, it's a phenomenon that might very well last longer than the memory of the movie itself. "I still get a kick out of when somebody uses it in that context in a book, or in a news article or an op-ed or something," Dan told us. "It's very flattering to hear it used in that regard."

After testing *The Blair Witch Project*, Artisan provided money for several alternate endings to be shot, each more intricate than the next. In the end, they decided that the original ending was the most effective, and kept it in the film.



awarded the right to design the actual Blair Witch herself - in what was a "big deal" at the time. In the end, we received two variant tree-witch figures (one sporting a lame branch-head, and the rare improved "deadlock" head). Soon after this deal, McFarlane landed the comic book rights for the film and released just one sole issue before the license was pronounced dead in 2001. As with the Bantam books (mentioned above) a few more items saw release over the years, however, nothing as penetrating or interesting as when the Blair Witch took hold of the world between 1999 and 2000.

## 10 YEARS ON, LOOKING BACK

were real, while comic book and savvy horror fans knew the truth - and were lining up in proverbial queues to not only see the film, but to obtain every ounce of Blair Witch memorabilia they could get their hands on - and a few lucky companies benefited from this demand!

Aside from movie poster sales, which were through the roof (literally, dozens of eBay sales at the time were raking in upwards of \$100 for original t-shirts from the Blair Witch), a small upstart comic book company dubbed Ori Press, had obtained the rights to Blair Witch, and quickly released their first book - *The Blair Witch Chronicles*. This title instantly sold-out and resulted in multiple reprints (and further installments), thus making Blair Witch one of the hottest comics in town (and, along with a series of Kevin Smith books, helped put Ori on the map)!

By the time the licensing world got wind of this growing attraction, a number of companies jumped on board, resulting in a multitude of interesting pieces of BWP merchandise. Keychains, shirts, hats, necklaces and other quick turn-around items were created. Two of the most noteworthy releases were the Blair Witch inspired computer games and an onslaught of BWP books. Gathering of Developers produced no less than three video games (Volume I: Rustin Parr 1941, Volume II: Coffin Rock 1896 and Volume III: Elly Kedward 1786) in 2000. None of which resulted in much fame, these games were relegated to PC usage only. The books, published by Pocket, focused on a large array of the Blair Witch's mythology. Such titles as "The Secret Confession of Rustin Parr," and "A Dossier" were among the more noteworthy. In recent years, Bantam books released a series of teen novels revolving around the films.

Possibly the most interesting items to stem from *The Blair Witch* were a small number of action figure releases. In Japan, blockbuster toy company Mediamore released two box sets of Kubrick block-o figures based on the characters from the first and second feature film. In the US, however, it was Todd McFarlane who had the opportunity to not only release



a widely-available figure based on the film, but he was

Various pieces of Blair Witch merchandise are shown throughout these pages, including costumes with drive letters, keychains, candles, pens, hats, necklaces, books (page 48), teen novels (below) and computer games (above).



After *The Blair Witch Project* was released, both Dan and Ed were offered a handful of high profile projects. Most notably, they turned down the opportunity to direct *Exorcist: The Beginning*, which turned out to be another in a long line of wise choices. Whether or not it was a conscious decision, both directors ended up taking extended sabbaticals from the film world. Dan went back to L.A., and Ed moved back to Maryland, where he got married and started a family.

Sanchez was the first to return with 2006's *Altered*. The alien abduction thriller got lost in the shuffle of a shakeup at Rogue Pictures, which resulted in the film being dumped to DVD with no promotion. The little Internet advertising it did receive was actually paid for partially out of Sanchez and his producer's own pockets. Online fans who had picked up the film through word of mouth seemed to take to it, with almost unanimously positive reviews from the horror community. Despite fan recognition, it was a tough period of time for Sanchez. He's poised for another comeback this fall, with his new supernatural horror film *Seventh Moon* starring Amy Smart.

Dan's return came a year after Ed's in 2007. He had two films released that year, *The Strand* and the horror thriller *The Believers*. His latest film, *The Objective*, has been his highest profile post-Blair Witch film to date, having debuted at 2008's Tribeca Film Festival in New York City. Although Dan and Ed mostly work apart these days, both confirmed the possibility of the two teaming up in the future for some type of Blair Witch reunion. The original prequel idea that has floated around for years is not entirely dead, but at the moment they are actively pursuing possible deals for a direct sequel to *The Blair Witch Project*. With film companies looking more and more towards established properties in a tough economy, the timing may finally be right to bring their own sequel to the fans.

It's clear by their long absences from the film world that *The Blair Witch Project* was something that took a lot out of the directing duo, both mentally and physically. Be it the eventual backlash that resulted from too much hype, or the inevitable comparisons that will be made each time either one of them releases a new film, there are both ups and downs to having directed the highest grossing independent film of all time.







## PARODIES/SPOOFS

While virtually every talk show, sitcom, and live... anything (even a special Scooby Doo parody) spoofed the Blair Witch Project after its release 10 years ago, Moreso, Heather Donahue's crying apology to the camera was the victim of major parody (and probably explains her disinterest in anything to do with the film after all these years. Shown here is the most noteworthy direct spoofs, including a Pauly Shore title, and two soft-core porns (both of which were sequelized).

With that in mind, we asked both Ed and Dan the same question... "Blair Witch blessing or burden?" Dan seemed torn. "It's a double edged sword," he told us. "Certainly it's given us opportunities we otherwise would not have had. However, at the same time as an artist you don't want to just be known for one project. It was so big and so huge that I kind of half expected to take my lumps on the next couple of movies that I did." Dan laughed and then paused for a moment. "So we'll see what happens with the next one."

Ed answered the question with the same laid back demeanor that he maintained throughout all of the conversations we had while researching this article. "It's all gravy," he said. "Blair Witch was like hitting a grand slam on your first at bat. My whole thing at this point, I just want to make a living making films. I just want to be able to make enough money to take care of my family. As long as our business model continues to allow us to make movies, I really can't complain."

Joe Berlinger doesn't have quite as rosy an outlook on his Blair Witch experience. His voice understandably tinged with bitterness, he spoke to us about how the film's minor cut following perplexes him. "I find it ironic and a little difficult to process," he told us, "because there are things about that film that I absolutely hate. But now that people are starting to embrace it, I'm conflicted."

The critical response to Book of Shadows devastated Joe, who up until that point had enjoyed positive reviews on his previous films. His salvation came in the form of the 2005 documentary *Some Kind of Monster*, about the legendary heavy metal band Metallica, whom Joe had been friends with for years. The film follows the band as they prepared to record the album *St. Anger*, and worked out their interpersonal issues together in group therapy. Joe feels the experience also served as therapy for himself, and the positive critical response

helped him regain his directorial confidence. His latest project, *Crude* tells the story of a group of Ecuadorians suing Chevron for \$27 billion in damages for land destroyed over the course of nearly three decades by pollution. *Crude* debuted recently to rave reviews, and will be released in theaters this fall.

You never once see the Blair Witch through-out either of the movies that were named after her. Just as that creates a unique viewing experience for everyone who watches them, so to has the experience of living through The Blair Witch Project become something dif-



ferent for everyone involved. Whether a blessing, a curse, or something in between, the little independent film that came out of nowhere in 1999 is just as powerful today as it was 10 years ago. That goes for its die hard fans and supporters as well as those responsible for creating it. It was, in many ways, a signal of the death of innocence in the Internet age. A similar marketing hoax would never make it out of the beginning stages these days without being instantly scuffed at by a jaded Internet crowd who has seen it all. The game is out of the bottle so to speak, and the magic is gone. Thank God for DVD then, where we can relive it any time we want. 🍷



## SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

As part of the voluminous Blair Witch universe, three separate documentaries exist, although not all are easy to find.



**CURSE OF THE BLAIR WITCH:**  
Written by Myrick and production designer Ben Rock, this documentary aired on the Sci-Fi channel to help hype the release of the first film. *Curse* is an amalgamation of leftover footage that was cut from the feature, as well as supplemental interviews and analysis. Originally released on VHS by Arisan, it was included in its entirety on the Special Edition DVD.

### THE BURKITTVILLE 7:

Between the first and second film, Arisan commissioned two new documentaries to help keep the story in the public's minds. Dan and Ed passed these projects off to Ben Rock, who was excited to have his first directing gig. The doc is a strange case study/enactment looking at the story of Rustin Parr. The special aired on the cable network Showtime, and in the US it is currently only available on an out of print VHS. Overseas it was released as part of the Book of Shadows DVD.



### SHADOW OF THE BLAIR WITCH:

Rock's second documentary, this one filmed for the Sci-Fi channel, was a true-crime piece on the "real life murders" that were the inspiration for Joe Berlinger's *Blair Witch 2: Book of Shadows*. Like *The Burkittsville 7*, "Shadow" remains unreleased on DVD in the US despite being on the Book of Shadows DVD in other countries.

# Gore Hound

by Aaron Crowell

## MARK OF THE DEVIL

Easily the most violent, gory and explicit of all the films based on the witch hunts that took place throughout Europe between the 15th to 18th centuries, *Mark of the Devil* was a horror film that came in the wake of the success of Michael Reeves' final film, *The Witchfinder General* (released in America originally under the title *Conqueror Worm*). The German producers behind *Mark of the Devil* wanted Reeves for the job, but he tragically died from an accidental barbiturate overdose at the young age of 25. Instead, producer Adrian Hoven was slated to star and direct, he even delivered a screenplay titled *The Witch Hunter Dr. Dracula*. Although directing duties did eventually shift to British director Michael Armstrong who worked as Reeves' assistant on *The Witchfinder General*, Hoven and this new director disliked each other intensely. They consistently bickered over the smallest issues throughout the full course of shooting. Hoven did share directing duties in the absence of Armstrong. He also stars in the film as a nobleman who is taken into custody and interrogated using the Chinese water torture (a scene Hoven came up with), only that particular torture was not used in the European witch hunts, ultimately hurting the historical accuracy of the picture ... it is very hard, to this day, to determine what scenes each director actually shot. When Armstrong first arrived, he totally rewrote the script. Even though he hated it, Hoven (for the most part) stayed true to Armstrong's script in his absence, only adding a few scenes. One can only imagine how much better the film could have been had Hoven not interfered during the production process. Another problem that plagued the shoot was a massive language barrier; at least half a dozen languages being spoken on the set, confusing both cast and crew.



*Mark of the Devil* was also actor Udo Kier's first color film, which catapulted his career since he was a relative unknown at the time. Kier's character, Count Christian von Maruh, slowly realizes that his sire and mentor, Lord Cumberland, played by Herbert Lom, is not an infallible defender of God as he had originally believed him to be. And worse, he perceives that the witch hunts are nothing more than a farce of justice in the name of the Lord, when a woman he falls in love with named Vanessa Benedikt (Olivera Katanna) is falsely accused, among others. Lom is a legendary character actor who is best known for his role as Chief Inspector Charles Dreyfus, Inspector Clouseau's long-suffering superior in Blake Edwards's *Pink Panther* films. He is better known by horror fans from his various roles in such films as *Phantom of the Opera* (1962), *Dorian Gray* (1970), *Jess Franco's Count Dracula* (1970), *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1971) and *La setta* (AKA, *The Devil's Daughter*, 1991). Lord Cumberland has come for one reason and that is to stamp out witchcraft in a small Austrian village near a castle deep in the beautiful mountains. The film is based on real life events that transpired in both cities: Nuremberg and Munich. Even the Austrian castle that

POSITIVELY THE MOST  
HORRIFYING FILM  
EVER MADE



the first film  
rated 'V'  
for violence



the film is shot in is a museum from that time period that did actually play host to witch interrogations and real life torture. Many of the torture devices and swords seen in the movie were truly authentic and had been used at some point in history. Armstrong has even stated that he added real dialing from the three actual cases, adding to the historical accuracy. "Mark" is widely considered an exploitation movie by many, but remains an unpretentious effort that is rooted in fact and provides proof that these sadistic events did unfold



In Germany, the film is a cult phenom, and even enjoyed annual summer screenings. In America, upon its release, vomit bags were given to every patron who purchased a ticket. Tag lines such as "Positively the most horrifying film ever made," and "Likely to upset your stomach" were strong testimonials indeed, but back in 1972 when it screened here in the States, it was still way ahead of its time. The vomit bag gimmick had been used before, but never had it received such an endorsement being mentioned on radio spots for the film's adverts, proving a successful form of promotion. People reportedly did use those barf bags, as they served their intended use after all, allowing this promotional tool to pull double duty. The film proved very profitable in America, even more so than *The Witchfinder General* had been, most likely due to the strong PR campaign and all those shocking scenes of gore.



All the tortments in the film are carried out by the Executioner (Herbert Fox) as was standard practice back in the day. Lord Chamberland was a state witch finder while the ever creepy Albino (perfectly cast and played by Reggie Nalder) was the resident witch finder who had been tracking down and accusing local villagers for two long years. The resident witch hunters acted more on personal impulses, rather than duty. They understood the erroneousness of the entire witch hunts while the state appointed hunters took their position more stoically





As the indictments are readied for Lord Cumberland to oversee, we meet the accused Deirdre von Bergenstern (Gaby Fuchs) who was expelled from the priory after she became pregnant with what is believed to be the devil's child. As she is put to the question, she is forced to endure the thumbscrews, stretching on the rack, a vicious flogging and finally, having hot branding irons pressed into



the soles of her bare feet. Her tormentors receive no confession of witchcraft or of her fornication with Satan despite all their best efforts; however, she does continue to implicate the Lord Bishop of raping her - the honest truth. This news must be a lie though, for no Man of God can be guilty of such a crime, as Lord Cumberland hears her continued accusation he has two words for the Executioner: "The Tongue." What follows is easily the

bloodiest and most disgusting scene in the film (and maybe this entire subgenre of films). The Executioner procures a large steel device used to keep the victim's head and body fixed in place which also holds open the mouth. He then grabs a pair of jagged pliers and tears out her tongue. This scene was difficult for Gaby due to the fact that Herbert Fux was forced to leave filming that day to go to another job

(as his frustration is quite visible in this segment). That was but half of the difficulty Gaby faced when she had to put a weeks-old calf's tongue (and a lot of fake blood) in her mouth for this infamous scene. Since her character, Deirdre von Bergenstern, continued to proclaim her innocence, a false confession is finally documented, as she is then sentenced and burned alive before the gleeful villagers.

Another character who succumbs to horrible torture in this period piece is the young Baron Daumer (Michael Maen) who has been charged with being possessed by the devil. Only he knows that it is a plot by the cardinal bishops to murder him as his estates and goods will be forfeited to the Church. Lord Cumberland comes to him in an effort to save his life asking him to sign over his worldly goods to the Church or he must denounce him as a sorcerer and execute him, as Daumer simply spits in his face. His torture begins with a stool of nails that his bare buttocks are placed on with his feet placed in a pillory where he receives a vicious castinado (severe whipping administered to the soles of the feet). Next he endures the thumbscrews, and then the heating (by building a small fire underneath) of the interrogation chair he is confined in (later followed by another flogging). A third case involves a aristocratic family who are persecuted for nothing more than performing a puppet show with wooden dummies. The Nobleman, played by Hoven, is tortured (as mentioned above) while his wife and children are imprisoned. The impotent Lord Cumberland then meets with the beautiful Nobleman's Wife (Ingeborg Schöner)

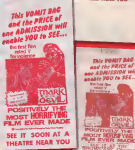
and rapes her, followed by condemnation of both her and the Baron Daumer by decapitation. The Baron sadly is not very lucky as they cart his headless corpse away as the villagers finally spring into action, leading to a full scale revolt. Lord Cumberland narrowly escapes, leaving his pupil (Kier) to be captured by the villagers and executed using a device built for the film that bares a strong resemblance to the Gackler's Pole Arms that originated in Spain, a device often used to control naked or half naked prisoners. The giant bolt is placed around his waist and closed, killing him slowly as his loved one, Vanessa, is mere moments too late to save him. Mark of the Devil is (for this Gorehound at least) the best and most accurate film to portray this era, considering the true horrors that transpired. It is tame but will continue to shock and offend viewers for generations and I find great solace in that. 🖤

Checco company Eddie Entertainment was known for placing random images on their VHS re-release titles. Shown at left is their issue of Mark of the Devil prominently featuring adult film star Ashley Renard, who clearly is not featured in this film. Also shown is the Lightning Video box for Mark of the Devil.



Bookmeister William Coetz is a bit known for his expert use of theatrical gimmicks first employed during the late 1950s and early '60s to fill low budget B-movie theaters. Fifty years later promotional movie marketing techniques have enjoyed a rich and illustrious history. In the 1970s a promotional gambit that hit horror moviegoers in the gut was the air sickness bag campaign. Mark of the Devil was the first film to successfully use this shameless marketing ploy as its principal selling point in a clever advertising ploy to back up the film's tagline, "Likely to upset your stomach." At every theatrical screening of the film the audience were given a free vomit bag with the Mark of the Devil one-sheet poster art printed on it with their ticket. While it is unclear how many bags were actually produced, or even used, actor Herbert Fux who plays the Executioner and torturer in the film, recalls people running for the bathrooms in screenings he attended. Over the great many years it has become a true test to hunt down an original 1972 Mark of the Devil bag. They were reprinted so many times during the film's initial theatrical run that debate rages among collectors to what certifies a truly original bag. However, some bags did include a hand dated 1972 cardboard tag inside that stands as a legitimate certification of authenticity. To make matters worse, over the years they have been reproduced like crazy with varying bag designs and sizes of the printed title image. Even the text on the bags have different theater adverts. Below is a sampling of both original and reproduced

original and reproduced paper pouches for the film from over the past 37 years.





# "THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE"

The original concept for *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* came from a combination of Tobe Hooper's experiences and ideas. First was Tobe's idea about solar flares and sunspots affecting people's behaviors. This is the reason the film begins with a shot of the sun, still playing with the idea that this could contribute to making people go mad and do inhuman acts. Second was an experience Tobe had in the hardware department of a Montgomery Ward during the Christmas shopping rush. He was so sick of the crowds that when he eyed a chainsaw sitting on display he imagined what it would be like to grab it and saw his way out of the store cutting through anything or anyone who stood in his way. Third was his love for the old EC Comics. Tobe started reading them at age 7 which left a long lasting impression on his life. He loved

how fantastical the stories were and that they were not in any way based on logic. Lastly was the fear of a story some relatives from Wisconsin used to tell him when he was a child. It was the story of a man who would kill people and then wear the skin of his victims. He would also make things out of his victim's remains, such as lamp shades and furniture. Sometimes he would even go as far as to eat their flesh. This story haunted Tobe all through his childhood. It wasn't until he was an adult that he discovered that this wasn't just a campfire tale, but based on the true life crimes committed by Wisconsin's most notorious serial killer, Ed Gein. It was from these elements that *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* was born.

"TCM" was an independent film in every sense of the word. It didn't have the budget or luxury to shoot on soundstages or studio back lots when needed. These locations geographically were pretty true to life as to where they were in the film. So there

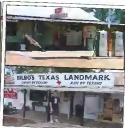
wasn't any Hollywood magic in the editing room as far as locations were concerned. The choosing of locations was based on what they could afford or could use for free local to their home in Austin, Texas. The original budget was supposed to be \$60,000, but ended up costing \$125,000 by the end. Filming began on July 15th, 1973 during one of the hottest summers to date.

The film opens with a shot of a corpse sitting atop a tombstone in a cemetery. This brings us to our first location, Bagdad Cemetery. Bagdad Cemetery was established in 1857 with the burial

of three-year-old John Babcock whose father gave the tract of land where the cemetery now exists to the community. Other earlier burials were Civil War veterans.

This isn't the easiest of locations to find because it doesn't actually have an address as far as I know. It is located on North Bagdad Road near the intersection of Ranch Road 2243 in Leander, Texas. The cemetery itself isn't very large, so finding the tombstones used in the film is pretty easy. There are gravel roads you can use to drive through the cemetery and the famous tombstones are right next to one of these roads. Both of these tombstones are over 100 years old. The tall one is dated 1865 and the smaller one 1897. The corpse you see sitting atop a tombstone is actually sitting on a fake tombstone right in the middle of the gravel road where it was placed for the scene. This location is open to the public, but be respectful... it is a cemetery. However, I think you have to take at least one photo of yourself doing your best impersonation of the corpse.

Next stop is the family gas station and BBQ shack. Formerly called Ryan's Hill Prairie Grocery, it had been closed for several years. However, it reopened in 2004 under new management as Bilbo's Texas Landmark. Sadly, it closed again in 2006. Last I heard



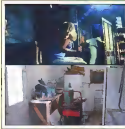
the building and property were up for sale.

It is located at 1073 State Highway 304 in Bishop, Texas.

While I was there back in 2004, I spoke to the owners who were quite proud of the fact that their little BBQ shack had been made famous by the film. They told me that at least once a day someone comes in and asks about *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. They even said they had considered renaming the place "The Texas Chainsaw BBQ." I told them they absolutely should! Maybe if they had named it to be into the film, perhaps it would still be open today.



They were very cool about letting me take pictures and video of the entire place, including the "off-limits" employees-only area which is where Sally Hardesty is beaten by the Cook. It really isn't much to see because the room is barely recognizable to the film.



The gas pumps are no longer out in front. There is still a small island where they once stood.

This next section is for the die hard TCM fans only - Quick Hill. Next to Round Rock, Texas, this is the former site of the infamous family's home. But don't worry, because Leatherface and his family's home has not been destroyed... it has been moved to another location which we will cover later in this article. Right off of Old CR-172, most of the film takes place right around this area.

Head northbound on CR-172 from SH 45 and you will make a right on Hester's Crossing. Immediately to the right you will see Old CR-172 behind the first of two cattle gates. You will have to park and walk to all of the locations from here. Climb over the gate and begin making your way up the hill. Just so you know, CR stands for Country Road and SH for State Highway.

Old CR-172 is the actual road the film's finale takes place on. This is the road where Sally barely escapes, the Hitchhiker is run over and Leatherface does his



manic dance with the chainsaw, knowing he let his victim escape.

At the top of the hill, the road ends where Highway 45 crosses. The driveway to the family's house is to the left.



The driveway to the family's house is still there. Several scenes were shot on this driveway, including Franklin's death, the Cook's disciplining of the Hitchhiker and the chasing of Sally Handesty by the Hitchhiker and Leatherface after her second escape from the house. The driveway is very hard to make out these days due to greenery growing over most of it. At the end of the driveway, you will come to the spot where the house was. Still visible today are the stone columns that served as the foundation of the family house and the back door stairs.



To the back left of where the house once stood is the area that the shed, water tower and windmill used to be in. Behind the house was a barn and coral where you see Kirk and Pam discover the graveyard of victims' cars. It is also no longer there today.

Behind where the house, barn and coral once stood is the dry creek bed where Kirk and Pam stop to rest. It is very hard to find because there has been

a lot of growth in this area on top of 30 years of natural erosion. It is near the base of the east side of the hill.

Right across Old CR-172 from where the family's house was is the location where the grandparents' house used to stand. This is the run-down abandoned home the kids visit that is referred to as the old Franklin place.

This location burned to the ground in the late 1970s, but some remnants of the limestone used to make the house can still be found there today. State Highway 45 now goes right next to where the house previously stood.



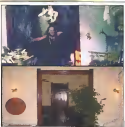
For the record, I have no idea how much longer any of these locations at Quick Hill will be around. The development company La Frontera has built all around Quick Hill and is getting closer and closer every day. If these locations are something you really want to see,

I highly recommend you go as soon as possible. Here is a little map I put together to try and help you find these locations, if you decide to visit Quick Hill. Lastly, we get back to the family house.

In the summer of 1988, the family house was purchased by Dennis and Barbara Thomas and moved from Quick Hill to Kingsland, Texas about 70 miles away. Today it is a restaurant called the Junction House located at 1010 King Street. Yes, that is right, you can actually go eat some BBQ in the real "Chainsaw" house! I have done it and I suggest you do

it, too. Just be cautious of those hard-shelled pepperorns. For more information you can visit their Web site at [www.junction-house.com](http://www.junction-house.com).

At the rear of the house there used to be a porch enclosure in front of the back door. This is where Sally lands after jumping through the upstairs window



As you can see the Chicken Room appears to be a little more sanitary to eat in nowadays

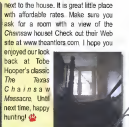


You can have dinner right where Leatherface had a nice break above

Leatherface looks down from the window as Sally tries to escape. You can see the window in the previous photo. Here is a look at the window area from the inside.

The people that own the restaurant are quite aware of its past and have embraced it. In fact, several Chainsaw reunions have been held at the restaurant. If you are coming from out of town, I highly recommend you stay at the Antlers Inn which sits right

next to the house. It is a great little place with affordable rates. Make sure you ask for a room with a view of the Chainsaw house! Check out their Web site at [www.theantlers.com](http://www.theantlers.com). I hope you



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## A person wearing a hockey mask and a dark shirt, holding a large machete.



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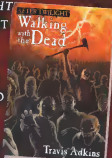
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# THEY CAME FROM THE KRYPT!

by Jen Hefley

Here at the Krypt, we are always exploring different subgenres within horror. Whether you're a seasoned veteran or just beginning your journey, there are plenty out there to keep a fan busy. With this entry, we explore one of those darkened pathways, through the graveyard, and under the moonlit night. Won't you join us?

Witchcraft is a horror subgenre comprising many different mini subgenres of its own. There are traditional evil witches, riding their brooms and casting spells. There are historical accounts of young women tortured to death, most often as a result of the accusations leveled by those within their own community — motivated by greed, aversion or lust. We even have modern day witches, who are not necessarily as scary as folklore suggests. For this issue, giving nods to all the witches — good and bad, historical and fictional — we take a look at two slightly obscure black-and-white films, each dealing with a different type of witch.

Our first film, *Burn, Witch, Burn* (aka: *Night of the Eagle*), is based on a Fritz Leiber short story, "Conjure Wife." A modern day tale of witchcraft (at least when it was released in 1962), it stars Peter Wyngarde as Norman Taylor, a college professor who seems to have it all: beautiful wife and home, great teaching job, along with the respect and friendship of most of his students and fellow faculty members. But is this good fortune due to his hard work and dedication, or is there perhaps some occultic

ance highlight is the subtle but excellent turn by Margaret Johnson as the rival wife of one of Taylor's colleagues.

Our next film is simply titled *Witchcraft*, released in 1964. This was director Don Sharp's second genre pic, following Hammer's *Kiss of the Vampire* the previous year. The story tells of a century-old feud between two families, begun when the Larrier family condemned one of the Whitlock women as a witch and had her buried alive. Over the years, the Larrier family has taken over the land once owned by the Whitlocks, fueling the conflict even more. When the construction of a new housing development (financed by the Larriers) accidentally disturbs the tomb of the accused witch, she is released from her imprisonment and plots her revenge.

Lensed in beautiful black-and-white and filled with atmospheric shots of foggy cemeteries and ghostly apparitions, it's amazing that this film doesn't have a bigger following. There are several strong resemblances to Mario Bava's *Black Sunday* — even the witch is dressed similarly to Barbara Steele, with her long flowing cloak and hood. A great example of how a black-and-white effort can compete with a color film in its look, *Witchcraft* is worth watching for Arthur Lavis' cinematography alone.

Jack Hedley stars as Bill, head of the Larrier family. Hedley had been in a few non-horror Hammer films like *The Scarlet Blade*, *The Secret of Blood Island* and their dark comedy *The Anniversary*. He even went onto work with Lucio Fulci in *New York Ripper*. Now that's a career! Here he plays the typical straightforward Englishman, trying to do the honest thing. He bears no ill will to the Whitlocks, but knows they are not the easiest to deal with.

Horror legend Lon Chaney Jr. receives top billing, giving a strong and powerful performance in his smaller role, if he was fulfilling the effects of alcoholism, you would never know from his fine work here. His characterization of the Whitlock patriarch is strong and earnest, fighting for his family's rights and determined to make those responsible pay for their transgressions against his family.

A film in dire need of a special edition release, there have been rumors of

*Burn, Witch, Burn* coming out on DVD for years, but it has yet to surface. (Oddly enough, while it never even got a VHS release here in the States, it did appear on laserdisc.) *Witchcraft* was also another movie that was once hard to find — MGM finally put it on one of their Midnight Moves double-feature discs in 2006, along with *Devils of Darkness*.

So on the next Sabbath, grab the popcorn (and your favorite good luck charm), and enjoy a couple of classic films in the witch subgenre. Or it will be the Evil Eye for you!



side influence? It all depends on what you believe which is the central point of this movie. What do YOU believe in?

As the film starts, we catch the ending of Professor Taylor's lecture on superstitions and the human need for them. Taylor dismisses witchcraft and the rest of such spiritual ilk as pure foolishness, so it comes as quite a surprise when he discovers what appears to be magic charms and trinkets throughout his own home. Upon confronting his wife Tansy (Janet Blair), she finally confesses that she has been using spells and charms to hold off the negative forces working against him at the college. When he subsequently forces her to burn all of this "nonsense," she warns that she will no longer be able to protect him. The next day at the college, Taylor is accused of improper conduct with one of his young female students, and as the day goes on, his once-perfect life slowly begins to unravel around him.

Could there be some truth to everything his wife was telling him? That is the real beauty of this film. Even though we think we see evidence of these special powers, are we really sure? Or is it all just simple coincidence, or maybe just our imagination? It all comes down to those words from the professor's lecture ... what do you believe?

Wyngarde does an excellent job as the cynic who refuses to believe, but it slowly shows how wrong he might be. As Tansy, Blair doesn't really fit the part (especially given audience expectation of what a witch would look like). But she still gives a strong performance, especially during scenes when she is desperately trying to protect her husband, even at the risk of her own life. Another perform-





# FANTASY

## COLLECTOR'S SPOTLIGHT: TODD MYNIA

"I have waited long enough! Now hear me, lords of the hounds, I shall see my placement in the pages of your periodical or you shall suffer my wrath!" This issue's Collector's Spotlight comes from Colorado, thanks to Todd Mynia. "A lot of my stuff I obtained myself, but most of the autographs my brother nabs for me at HorrorHound Weekends and the like. Among my most cherished items are a Freddy's Greatest Hits CD, my Shawnee Smith signed Saw blade, and a Liv Schreiber signed Ghostface mask. I also have an ultra rare inflatable Jack O' Lantern from the promotion of the original Friday the 13th's release on VHS. I am surprising my wife with this, so be sure to put a hello in there for her. Hope to see me soon! ...and keep up the gory work!"



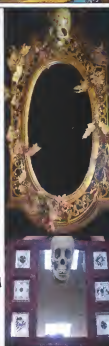
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# CONVENTION CALENDAR

Support your local horror conventions! Check out these upcoming shows. If we are missing an event you feel we should be covering, please e-mail us today at [mail@horrorhound.com](mailto:mail@horrorhound.com)

## Rue Morgue: Festival of Fear

August 28 thru 30th, 2009  
Toronto, Canada  
(Featuring Bruce Campbell, Roger Corman, and much more!)

## Scarefest

September 11 thru 13th, 2009  
Lexington, KY  
Lexington Convention Center  
(Featuring Doug Bradley, Gunnar Hansen and much more!)

## HorrorFind Weekend

September 25 thru 27th, 2009  
Hunt Valley, MD  
Marriott Hunt Valley Inn  
(Featuring Fairuz Balq, Corbin Bernsen and much more!)

## Cinema Wasteland

October 3 thru 5th, 2009  
Strongsville, OH  
Holiday Inn Select  
(Featuring Joel M. Reed, Caroline Monroe, Fred Williamson, Lynn Lowry and much more!)

## Spooky Empire

October 9 thru 11th, 2009  
Orlando, FL  
The Wyndham Resort  
(Featuring George Romero, Fairuz Balq, Tippi Hedren, HG Lewis and much more!)

## Rack & Shack

October 16 thru 18th, 2009  
Worcester, MA  
The Palladium/DCU Center  
(Featuring Derek Mears, Jason Mewes and much more!)

## October Horror & Comic Festival

October 17 thru 18th, 2009  
Nashville, TN  
Tennessee State Fairgrounds  
(Featuring Dick Warlock, Glenn Shadix and much more!)

## Flashback Weekend

October 23 thru 25th, 2009  
Rosemont, IL  
The Midway Drive-In  
(Featuring Lance Henriksen, Jenette Goldstein, A Ginger Snaps reunion and much more!)

## Chiller Theatre

October 30 thru Nov. 1st, 2009  
Parisipppany, NJ  
(Guest list not yet revealed)

## Cryptican Minneapolis

November 6 thru 8th, 2009  
Bloomington, MN  
Sheraton Hotel  
(Featuring Margot Kidder, Tony Moran, Steve Dash and more!)

## HorrorHound Weekend Cincinnati

November 20 thru 22nd, 2009  
Cincinnati, OH  
Sheraton Cincinnati North  
(Featuring Elvira, a Night of the Creeps reunion, Quinn Lord (Trick 'r Treat's Sam) and much more!)

## HorrorHound Weekend Indiana

March 26 thru 28th, 2010  
Indianapolis, IN  
Marriott Indianapolis East  
(Details Coming Soon!)

\*see next issue for more show listings.

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## NEXT ISSUE

We have some fun plans  
in store for Issue #20, hit-  
ting stores in two months!

Want to have your company's products or events featured in the pages of HorrorHound? Contact us via e-mail at [mail@horrorhound.com](mailto:mail@horrorhound.com) or check out our Website at [www.HorrorHound.com](http://www.HorrorHound.com) for more information. We urge you to let us know what we may be missing. Fans can contact us about news as well - and send us letters, questions, comments and content. Show your dedication to the horror community by submitting your original art, collection photos, stories, tattoos, etc.

In every issue of *HorrorHound*, we have included a classic genre title into our own structured Hall of Fame. These films, sometimes of the classic Universal Monsters era and other times of the more modern variety, all carry one major quality in which we look to when deciding upon such inductions ... no matter what your tastes, every self-proclaimed horror fan should have seen these films! Whether it be *American Psycho* and *Fight Night*, or *Lon Chaney Jr.'s Wolf Man* and *George A. Romero's Night of the Living Dead*. These are films we, as a consensus, all agree should be viewed, collected and touted as the "best of the best." Many greats in the world of horror have been included amongst these Hall of Fame awards. Clive Barker, Tobe Hooper, Peter Jackson and Sam Raimi can all claim ownership of at least one *HorrorHound* Hall of Fame movie (for what it's worth)...

We should mention first that while Stephen King is one of the greatest horror writers of our time (with one of the longest resumes of film translations than almost every other genre writer), we at *HorrorHound* have just to acknowledge his accomplishments in print. That is, until now. In 1984 a feature length interpretation of his story, *Children of the Corn*, was released to great response. "Children of the Corn" was just one of the many exciting stories collected in his 1978 compilation, *Night Shift* (which also hosted such tales as "The Mangler," "The Boogeyman," "Trucks," "Sometimes They Come Back," "Lawmower Man," "Bedground" (as filmed in *Nightmares and Dreamscapes*), "The Ledge" and "Quitters, Inc." - the last two of which were filmed as short segments in the anthology classic *Car's Eye*).

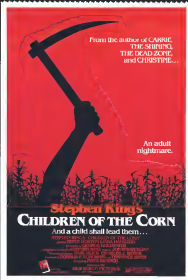
The "Children" short told the story of Burt and Vicki, an unhappily married couple driving cross-country to California to visit Vicki's brother. Along the backroads of rural Nebraska, they hit a young boy who has been left in the middle of the road, dead. After traveling to a nearby town of Gallin, Burt investigates the town before finding his wife has been kidnapped by a crew of children, who apparently have disposed of adult influence and taken over the small town. After escaping the kids, Burt is killed while traveling through a Cornfield, but his wife may have succumbed to a worse fate. The children have taken to sacrificing adults in the name of "He Who Walks Behind the Rows" - as anyone over the age of 19 is given to this "being" to assure the crops remain healthy.

"Children" happened to host a series of similarities to other works of the past, most notably *Who Could Kill a Child?* - a Spanish film featuring an island which has been taken over by children, but with no source of evil or dol to explain the events. As with most of King's work, the story still proved to be entertaining and quite scary (along with "Boogeyman," possibly the most frightening of his shorts).

With the surge of filmed translations of his writings, it was no surprise when New World Pictures acquired the rights to release *Children of the Corn* to theatres just five years later! It should be of note, however, to also acknowledge the short film *Disciples of the Crow*, which is another adaptation of "Children," which was filmed and released just one year prior to the Linda Hamilton-starrer. *Disciples of the Crow* (or *The Night of the Crow* as it was sometimes released), was a 30 minute retelling of the story, with minor changes made to the plot (mostly revolving around the addition of a crow god, which the children worship). Directed by John Woodward and starring Elosée Lester and Gabriel Falso, this film can only be found online (currently available on YouTube) and via a VHS as part of a compilation dubbed *The Night Shift Collection* (two versions of *Night Shift* exist, so be sure you acquire the correct release).

# HORRORHOUND HALL OF FAME CHILDREN OF THE CORN

by Nathan Hanneman



As mentioned, *Children of the Corn* is a Linda Hamilton feature that every self-respecting *HorrorHound* knows and loves. Directed by Fritz Kirsch, *Children of the Corn* follows the King short very closely, with only minor changes made to the plot (example, now Burt and Vicki are just boyfriend and girlfriend traveling cross-country as Burt has accepted a new job as a doctor while also boasting commitment issues). After the accident which lead the couple to nearby Gallin to find help, Vicki is kidnapped while Burt believes a pair of children who want nothing to do with the town's inhabitants of religious-crazed minors who have already offed the adult populace. After discovering what has occurred in this town, Burt fights off maniac kids and rescues his girlfriend while also destroying the Cornfield, and He Who Walks Behind the Rows in the process. Stretched to feature length, one of the most important supplemental elements to this classic film is the added storyline revolving around children Isaac and Malachi. Played effectively creepy by Jonathan Franklin and Courtney Gains, these two battle it out for leadership of the cult, as Isaac's patient acceptance of their god's word, comes to a head against Malachi's more forwardness against "Outlanders" and blood lust in ensuring the town's ruling. What we are left with is a chilling recreation of one of King's tales, during a time in which such stories were flourishing at the theaters (including other possible future Hall of Famer's *Christine*, *The Dead Zone*, *Cujo*, *Creepshow* and *Silver Bullet*). Budgeted at around \$3 million, the little picture procured an estimated \$14.6 million during its entire US theatrical run, profitably on-par with all of King's films (listed above) at the time.

Six sequels have been filmed to date, a testament to the original's popularity, or film studio's lack of imagination ... The first sequel (dubbed *The Final Sacrifice*) hit direct-to-VHS in 1982 thanks to Dimension Films (a company who went on to be known for their lackluster DVD sequels, most iconically from the *Halloween* film series). With further releases in '92, '95, '96, '98, '99 and '01, the *Children of the Corn* franchise became one of the most watered down in horror history. The only noteworthy installment coming from the 1993 sequel, "868 Isaac's Return," in which Jonathan Franklin reprises his role from the original film. The movie also starred Nancy Allen and Stacy Keach. Other names to have appeared in *Children* sequels over the years include Charles Hallahan, Naomi Watts, Eva Mendes, David Caradine, Michael Ironside and Karen Black. To date, all sequels have been released onto DVD, however, the second installment is currently out of print and sells on the secondary market for a pretty penny.

The original film proved to have an affect on horror fans over the years, especially those who witnessed its original release in the 1980s. Since the inception of DVD, it has been released in impressive box sets (including a three-pack with *Creepshow 2* and *Maximum Overdrive*, as well as a two-pack with *Creepshow 2* and a Divimax edition and most recently, the 20th Anniversary Blu-ray). In fact, this fall the Sy-Fy Network will premiere a made-for-television remake of *Children of the Corn* starring David Anders and Kandyse McClure, and directed by the original-film's producer Donald P. Borchers. Despite the fact that these children do grow up, their terrors seem to be never-ending. And while six sequels and one remake separate the world from the original horror from 1984, it is this original that has left its mark on so many, proving that He Who Walks Behind the Rows has a lot more followers than the small town of Gallin could ever provide.



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